

THE
FAIR CAMBRIANS.

VOL. III.



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FAIR CAMBRIANS.

A N O V E L.

*La Beauté de L'Esprit surpasse
Infiniment celle du corps.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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FAIR CAMBRIANS.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH, THE AUTHOR DOUBTS NOT, THE
READER WILL BE HIGHLY ENTERTAINED
WITH A VERY DIVERTING DIALOGUE.

ARABELLA entered her dressing room in no very easy state of mind; yet she was glad that the explanation had taken place, notwithstanding the storm which she foresaw would fall with violence upon her, the moment the consequences attendant upon it were known in the family. From her window she beheld his Lordship depart,

and rejoiced that he did so, without an altercation with her uncle.

SHE revolved every circumstance of her situation in her mind, and saw nothing that was not unpleasant in her prospect, at least for the present. She dreaded the displeasure of her mother, and the unreasonable violence of Mr. Stanley. She could not help being sensibly affected by the strange departure, and apparent neglect, of Sir George; a conduct so different from what she had reason to expect from the extreme attention, and friendly concern, he had manifested, on her account, in their last interview. Indeed, when she reflected upon his behaviour during the whole of that day, she could not, in any degree, reconcile it to his present proceeding.

PERHAPS, thought she, my heart has misled me; and I have mistaken compassion for my distress, a tenderness he would have shown for any one who appeared equally unhappy, for a partial attachment to me. And if it is
so,

so, can my present poignant feelings arise from that? Can a man, to whom I am totally indifferent, have the power of rendering me miserable? No, no; I can never be so weak; it is Maria, it is my unhappy sister, whose loss lies heavy on my mind. Now that I have, with such exquisite pain, and almost disgrace, purchased thy forgiveness, thou hidest thyself from me! Oh! return, return, and heal my wounded heart; thou only hast the power, it refuses all consolation that is not administered by thee.

IN these melancholy contemplations was the mind of Arabella employed till Johnson entered to acquaint her that dinner was ready; for she was not accustomed to assist her lady in dressing, unless summoned by her for that purpose; she frequently, indeed generally, performing that work entirely herself. She started, and Johnson repeated her information. "Does my mother know that Lord Charles Blair has left us?"

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YES,

“ YES, Madam; both she and Mr. Stanley saw his servants go off with the pheaton, and immediately sent to enquire the reason. Mr. Stanley seemed in a great passion, and wanted at first to stop them.”

ARABELLA trembled as she walked down the stairs, and stopped a few moments at the dining parlour door, before she could summons courage sufficient to enable her to enter. The countenances of her mother and uncle did not tend to lessen her apprehensions; there was a mixture of anger and solemnity in each, which seemed to speak their resolution to intimidate her, while a malicious pleasure sat on the face of Miss Marshall, which proved that she enjoyed the general discontent.

VERY few words were spoken during the time of dinner; and, even after the servants were withdrawn, the same solemn silence seemed likely to continue, except when interrupted by the governess, who addressed a

thousand soft, soothing things to the little Romeo, who, as usual, lay on her lap.

ARABELLA, who had not the least tincture of fullness in her disposition, was the first that spoke. "I fear, dearest Madam, you are greatly displeased with what I have done, and I feel very wretched on that account. You too, Sir, regard me with unusual coolness; but I intreat you both to reflect candidly on my situation, and the insuperable aversion I felt for the proposed alliance; and I am sure you will allow that I could not, with honour, act otherwise than I have done."

MR. Stanley's rage was too big for utterance. "Talk not of honour, Miss Dorville," cried her mother; "the manner in which you have acted, shows that you do not understand the meaning of the word. The rude way in which Lord Charles has left us, proves the light in which he sees your conduct;

duct; and the world will doubtless call it absurd and unjustifiable in a high degree."

"I HOPE, after a little consideration," answered Arabella, with much softness, "it will not appear wrong in your eyes; as I never could think of marrying his Lordship, surely the sooner he was undeceived the better."

"AND pray, Miss Dorville," said her uncle, half choaked with anger, "why could you never think of marrying him?"

"OUR affections, Sir, are not always in our own power; and mine could never have been his."

"RIDICULOUS stuff! Did ever any woman, above the rank of a plebeian, talk thus but yourself? Affections, indeed! Why, such a word is not to be found in a polite vocabulary. I suppose you have been reading novels, where all the pretty heroines marry for *love*, and such like nonsense; from these *you* have learned to have *affections*. But, if
you

you had a proper sense of what is due to your own dignity, and that of your family, you would not madly have thrown away such an opportunity of adding to the lustre of both."

"I AM perfectly satisfied, dear Sir, with my present rank in life; and for fortune, I wish for no addition to what I now possess."

"STUPID, absurd girl! Have you no ambition? no wish to raise yourself above the vulgar? Believe me, such ridiculous meekness very ill becomes you."

"You need not accuse her of an excess of humility," interrupted Mrs. Dorville; "I am sure she shows spirit enough on some occasions. If Sir George Brudenell had never come into this neighbourhood, we should have escaped this mortification. I am convinced it is a prepossession in his favour, which has induced her to reject one of the first matches in the kingdom."

"WELL, I could not have believed it possible, that a niece of mine could have

been so mean spirited. What woman, in her senses, would prefer being the wife of a simple Baronet, to the possession of a ducal coronet? Who would have a word or a look to bestow upon Lady Brudenell, when the Duchefs of Dunbeath appeared? Is it possible that you can prefer so comparatively low a situation, to one in which you would be inferior only to the Royal Family?"

"I THINK Sir George Brudenell, and several other gentlemen whom I have seen, preferable, in many respects, to Lord Charles; and I am not at all anxious for superior rank."

"WELL, heaven grant me patience to bear such trials! I now know how to pity poor Sir Joseph Braidwood, whose eldest daughter, being brought up with her grandmother in Yorkshire, fell in love with, and actually married, the curate of the parish. He, with a truly laudable spirit, immediately made his will, and cut her off with a shilling, making

making his youngest girl his sole heiress. But the silly old woman, who had brought such ruin upon her by a foolish low education, left her every thing she died possessed of, amounting to near twenty thousand pounds, which was particularly distressing to good Sir Joseph, as he had appropriated the greatest part of the sum, in his own mind, for paying some debts, which Lord Bubble, who had married his youngest daughter, had contracted at New Market. I am thankful that I have no children to bring such distress upon me."

"THE misfortune of my daughters," said Mrs. Dorville, "is their independance. If the Colonel had been wise enough to have left them in my power, they would have been more tractable."

"TRUE, true," cried Mr. Stanley. "How did the prudent management of the Honourable Mrs. Green save her daughter from ruin, as she has since acknowledged to me

more than once? General Blackmore was about my age when he paid his addressees to her, as polite a man as any in London, and offered large pin money, and an immense jointure; but Miss truly was engaged to a young templar, and could not bear to think of him. Her mother, however, being a sensible woman, and one that knew the world, gave her her choice, to go and starve at her lover's chambers, or share the General's noble house in Cavendish Square. One of these she insisted upon her doing within a week; and, as the young lady had not a shilling independent, she chose the latter; and there is not a happier wife in the world. She is every winter in London, living in the genteelest manner, spends all her mornings at auctions of pictures and curiosities, or in airings in one of the most elegant carriages about town. Then every evening she is at routs or public places, where she is universally admired. And in the summer she goes
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from one fashionable watering place to another.—Can any life be happier or more respectable? Yet you, Miss Dorville, have thrown away more than this! You might have enjoyed these pleasures in a higher degree, with all the added splendor of high rank.”

“GIVE me leave once more to assure you, my dear uncle, that I am absolutely unambitious of splendor; and the pleasures you mention are not at all suited to my taste; but believe me, it would have given me real satisfaction, if I could have complied with your desire, dearest Madam, and the wishes of my other friends.—But as that was impossible, and I have been actuated by what I believe a right principle in what I have done, it would greatly oblige, and render me much happier, if you would kindly pass over what has happened. I never either have or will dispute your authority.”

“ IN matters of no consequence,” interrupted Mrs. Dorville. I understand you perfectly. Your temper is naturally so easy and complying, that I really believe you have no choice in trifles; for Miss Marshall, Maria, or any body might have guided you in all your pleasures and amusements; you always seemed to think whatever they proposed best and most agreeable; so it was paying me a very small compliment, to avoid opposing my inclination in things absolutely indifferent to you. But when you chuse to have a will of your own, I see my opinion, or that of your uncle, has no influence at all.”

“ You have ~~not~~ only injured yourself in this affair,” said Mr. Stanley, “ but *me*, and very essentially too. You look surprized; but if you had the least knowledge of the world, you would think what a disadvantage the loss of my Lord’s friendship will be to me. I would not say so much to every one; but here I may own that it is not without considerable

considerable efforts that I gain admittance into the best company; indeed it is too high a privilege to be supposed easy of attainment: but the intimacy and protection of a person of his rank does your business at once. Why, it was coming in his company that gave such eclat to my return from the continent. Riding with him, and a nobleman of his acquaintance, one Sunday, in Hyde Park, got me invitations to two routs of the first consequence, where I should never have else been thought of; beside a permission to attend my Lady Dowager Coldstream to view some antiques that were to be disposed of. It is incredible to think how much I was benefited by his acquaintance! But now all is over; and he will doubtless neglect, if not insult, me, wherever we meet. The very thought distracts me: I can never show my face in the families to whom the credit and consequence of my intimacy with him introduced me. Little did I think, when I told
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all my acquaintance in town that I was taking him down to Beechwood for a few weeks, how soon, or on what terms, he would have left it. The morning we set out from London, I invited three of the most loquacious of my friends to breakfast with me, merely that it might be universally known that we actually went off together in his Lordship's pheaton; and, in a letter to one of them, since I arrived here, I even mentioned the connection that was likely to take place.—O, cursed folly; I shall be the diversion of those whose envy I lately excited!—The more I reflect, the more monstrous your conduct appears. Indeed, Miss Dorville, I can never forgive the injury you have done me.”

“ I WISH,” said Miss Marshall, spreading a cambric handkerchief over her little favourite, who was just dropt asleep, “ that his Lordship had gone away in better humour, and I think it might have been contrived.”

“ DOUBTLESS

“ DOUBTLESS it might,” answered he, “ if my niece had thought proper to have left it to me to disclose the affair; it might have been a very different matter. I am used to the society of people of condition, and know much better how to manage with them than she can be supposed to do.—I remember I was once very near offending a Knight of the Bath, by accidentally pressing my cane upon his gouty toe, as we sat in the same box at the play. He swore, and made wry faces, and seemed to view me with an eye of disgust. But, as luck would have it, a lady, about whom he was very much interested, came in at the end of the act; my seat happened to be next her’s, and, by giving it up to him, and contriving to call up his carriage just at the instant he wanted it, I made him my friend : and such, indeed, I have ever since found him; for he not only speaks or bows to me, whenever we meet in public, but even brought a foreigner of distinction

tion one morning to my lodgings, and while they waited for his coach, a heavy shower having overtaken them, favoured me with looking over my collection of antiques; so that what at first appeared likely to give me some uneasiness, was, by my happy address, converted into a singular benefit. O, sister, sister; you will have reason to repent your three years residence in Wales to the end of your life; it has been the ruin of both your children; never was any thing so ill judged."

"I BEG," replied Mrs. Dorville, with some warmth, "that I may be spared your reproofs; my conduct must be allowed to have been irreproachable. You know it was the Colonel's particular desire that I should remain here till Maria came of age."

"MERE idle stuff!" cried Mr. Stanley. "So absurd a request should not have been attended to. If I had been in England, all would have been well: you and your family should

should have removed to London, where you would have been seen in a proper light, and the girls have acquired very different notions from those which seem now to possess them."

"BE not quite so positive, if you please, Sir. I am independent of you, and all the world; and neither then was, or now will, be insolently dictated to."

"VERY well, Madam, very well! You will, perhaps, think proper to continue here the whole summer, instead of going to Weymouth or Brighthelmstone, as I meant to propose to you."

"THAT you may depend upon it I shall. I would not, on my account, leave Beechwood now; it would be proclaiming our mortification and disappointment to all the world. Perhaps, too, I may wish to remain here till I hear again from Maria. Remember, Sir, I have two daughters."

"THANK you, dearest Madam," cried Arabella, tears filling her eyes; "your truly
maternal

maternal consideration for her is very grateful to me. I wait, in anxious expectation, of hearing from her every hour. Were she but once restored to us, we should again be happy."

"AND so," said Mr. Stanley, addressing his sister, "you actually mean to remain here, and go on just as usual?"

"MOST certainly I do," replied she. "Nothing shall take me from home, at least till the Bath season commences: I would not risk the fatigue of travelling during the hot weather on any account."

"AND do you concur in this wise scheme?"

"MOST cheerfully," answered Arabella. "I love this place above all others, and can never leave it without regret."

"WELL then, as you are both resolved to follow your own devices, and will not suffer one, who knows more of the world, to direct you, I hope you will not take it ill, if I imitate the conduct of my friend, and depart to-morrow.

to-morrow. One good consequence may result from it; I can with a better grace write to his Lordship, and disavow all knowledge of the scheme he so highly resents; which I may very sincerely do; for I had not sufficient time to consider it before it was put in execution. Who knows but I may be able to reinstate myself in his good opinion? I wish to part on friendly terms with you both; and when you consider the infinite consequence Lord Charles's notice is of to me, I hope you will not disapprove of my resolution."

"I SHALL not attempt to alter it," replied Mrs. Dorville, with some haughtiness. "I think it is a pity you do not go to-night: you might possibly, by riding post, overtake him."

"WHAT irrational beings you dwellers among the mountains are!" cried Mr. Stanley. "I never knew a lady who kept the best company subject to these silly pets. Indeed,

deed, women of fashion have such frequent trials of their temper at the card table, that it would be strange if they were apt to be discomposed on trifling occasions. Yes, yes, I am every hour more and more convinced of the necessity of an early introduction into life. If Miss Dorville had spent more hours at the card table, and fewer in the library, she had been now the envied mistress of Lord Charles Blair, and in a short time had a ducal coronet on her coach. In what (to speak in your own manner) can the *happiness* of life consist, but in the manner of living? and if a lady has every accommodation, every elegance, every luxury, at her command, if she is obsequiously attended when at home, and followed by admiring crowds whenever she appears abroad, what can be wanting to her felicity?"

"MUCH, in my opinion," replied Arabella. "If happiness ever condescends to take up her abode in this world, she does not

not dwell among the idle and luxurious, and is very rarely followed by admiring crowds."

"THESE might be thought mighty pretty sentiments," interrupted Mr. Stanley, "from the lips of an Arcadian shepherdess; but I would advise you to recollect that the pastoral age is long since over, and not ridiculously attempt to revive the manners of it."

"You are much mistaken, dear Sir, if you imagine me a romantic visionary. All the happiness we are to expect here, is comparative, not perfect; but the greatest degree of it is surely to be obtained by leading a rational, and, as far as our situation and talents will permit, a useful, life. Whether the fashionable plan you mention answers this description, I leave you to judge."

"YOUR notions, I again repeat, are very strange ones for a young woman of your fortune. All that I know is, that one hears nothing of this kind in the best company; and it would be a high degree of presumption in

us to imagine we can instruct the first geniuses of the age.

"You will do me the justice to believe," answered Arabella, "that I never had a thought of the kind. I only plead for the right, and, indeed, I think it, the indispensable, duty of every individual, to regulate his actions according to his own sense of propriety."

"You argue most learnedly, Miss Dorville," cried her mother; "and your practice agrees perfectly with your theory. I will, however, candidly allow you to be generally in the right; and it is well that your understanding is good, or the immoveableness of your temper might be a great misfortune to you. Nay, no reply, my dear. I am fatigued with this long conversation: if you will attend me in an airing, perhaps I may hear what you have further to say in excuse of your refusal of this resentful Lord. With you, Sir, I own myself piqued; and
shall

shall not be displeased if you depart before my return. Do not, however, think I mean to quarrel with you; I shall always be glad to see you as a friend and brother, but not as a director of my actions."

"MRS. Dorville then left the room with a very stately air, attended by Arabella, who was eagerly desirous of being again on the tender and friendly terms with her mother, which she had ever been accustomed to, till the late unfortunate disagreement; and the favourable hint which had dropped from her respecting Maria, gave her spirits sufficient to enable her to attempt some further overtures for a perfect reconciliation between them, a point her heart was entirely set upon.

MR. Stanley, for some minutes after their departure, stood wholly undetermined whether he should wait their return, or immediately leave the house. But the remonstrances of Miss Marshall, and more especially

cially the recollection that his niece was young, beautiful, and rich, and therefore, notwithstanding her antiquated notions, might possibly yet make a figure in the great world, determined him to part with them on civil terms. He therefore, as men of the world are wont to do, on occasions where they imagine their remotest interest may be concerned, let his resentment sleep; and, after writing a letter, in the most obsequious terms of apology, to Lord Charles, received the ladies, at their return from airing, with the most perfect good humour and friendliness. In the course of the evening he again slightly mentioned his scheme for their removal to some fashionable watering place; but finding both his sister and niece totally averse to it, he dropped the subject; and Arabella, who wished to oblige him, when she could with propriety, prevailed upon her mother to promise, if no unforeseen accident prevented, that she would spend a part of the next
winter

winter in London. All animosities being thus happily ended, the evening passed comfortably, and the next morning Mr. Stanley left Beechwood.

CHAPTER XXV.

NOT QUITE SO DIVERTING AS THE LAST,
BUT FULL AS INTERESTING.

MRS. Dorville thought it now little worth while to resent the late conduct of her daughter, as it was impossible to recall what was past; and when she reflected upon the haughty behaviour of his Lordship, she did not so eagerly wish it, as she had before done. She therefore condescended to accept of those affectionate attentions which Arabella had ever been accustomed to pay, and to make her the usual return of tender politeness. More she was incapable of returning; her nerves were too delicate for exertions of
any

any kind; and she feared it would be very long before she should recover from the effects of the violent emotions she had recently experienced.

BUT, though Arabella seemed to have recovered her former share in her mother's good opinion and esteem, she could obtain no explicit declaration of her intentions with respect to Maria: she always fled from the subject; which she declared was too interesting for her exquisitely fine feelings to support; and, wearied with the anxious perseverance of her daughter upon it, at length forbid her, except she received some new intelligence, to mention it any more in her presence.

It was easy to guess that Miss Marshall was at the bottom of all this. She had considerable influence over Mrs. Dorville; and omitted no argument to persuade her, notwithstanding her engagements to Arabella, to keep steadily to the convent scheme,

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which was the only one that could answer the purpose of keeping her entirely out of Berkley's reach till she came of age; and she hoped in the course of almost five years to fix the heart of that "*dear deceitful*" entirely to herself. Of this, indeed, no one else could imagine there was a probability; for the Major, in two letters which he addressed to Miss Dorville, informing her of his unsuccessful endeavours to find her sister, had declared his intention of abandoning the Bank for ever, and even bidding adieu to his native country, if the object of his affections was finally lost to him.

These were discouraging assurances: but she had letters from Mrs. Harley, who still thought it possible that she might be useful to her, which spoke better things, though worded in so cautious a manner, that, had Maria herself seen them, no ill consequences could have followed. The flame of our love-sick governess had, indeed, one very extraordinary

extraordinary quality; though it at all times burned most vehemently, and frequently blazed out to a wonderful degree, yet the smallest possible quantity of fuel was sufficient to supply it; and though she read in his letters, the strongest and most romantic expressions of love and attachment to another, yet, by keeping that other out of his reach, she had little doubt of being able, in the end, to scorch the wings of this eccentric moth, who had so long gayly fluttered around the bright blaze of her attractions.

UNCERTAIN, as Arabella was, with respect to her mother's intentions, she yet grew hourly more anxious to hear of Maria: but days, weeks, months, passed away, and no intelligence of her arrived. She was more than distressed; notwithstanding her philosophy, her resolution, her good sense, notwithstanding her reliance upon that Providence which disposes all things for the best, she was unhappy. Her time, which had

heretofore been so pleasantly, so usefully employed, as to seem too short for her various avocations, was now a burden, and hung upon her with an almost insupportable weight. Her books, her music, her drawing, ceased to interest her. All the consolation she was capable of, she derived from visiting her little school, or entering the cottages of the poor and aged, to banish want, relieve sickness, and diffuse comfort and gladness; and even there the idea of her dear lost sister still accompanied her. Perhaps, she would say, my Maria is at this instant more wretched than these poor people whose sufferings I deplore! Their woes admit of alleviation; they are willing to receive, and grateful for my assistance; but she, who has every possible claim upon me, hides herself from my longing eyes, and refuses to be consoled. Cruel, cruel Maria! how dost thou wring thy sister's heart! Heaven forbid that thy anguish, forlorn as thou art, should even equal mine.

Not

Not unfrequently would Sir George Brudenell occur to her imagination. She repented that she had refused his offer of making enquiries after the fugitive; she wished that he had remained longer in the neighbourhood; he would then probably have repeated it. He appeared to share her grief, to sympathize in her sorrow! Surely he *did*; his looks, his words strongly expressed it; and into his generous bosom she could have poured her grief, for his mind was congenial to her own.—Yet, if he was really so interested for her, if her happiness was of consequence to him, was near his heart, as she was still willing to believe, why did he so suddenly disappear? Why leave her at a time when she so greatly needed consolation and assistance? just in the commencement of a friendship, which, she hoped, would have continued through the course of their future lives; and, more than all, why leave her so abruptly, without even

the ceremony of an adieu?—All this was as unaccountable as it was distressing. The uniformly good and generous character which all who knew united in bestowing upon him, and her own minute observations on his conduct and sentiments when they had been together, forbid her to rank him among those insignificant and various beings, whose actions take their rise from the caprice of the moment. She had every reason to believe him kind and compassionate to a degree which the world calls excessive, to all that came within the sphere of his influence; and why he should depart from his general plan of conduct in this one instance, she could not guess. She tried to account for it in a thousand different ways; she was eagerly desirous to justify him; but to do it satisfactorily was impossible; and she could only at length conclude, that he might possibly have reasons for acting in a manner that appeared to her so unfeeling, which she could not perceive, or he, with propriety, communicate.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONTAINS PART OF A VERY INTERESTING AND
AFFECTING NARRATIVE.

IN this anxious state of mind did the amiable Arabella pass near four months; during which time she declined all company, and neglected all avocations, but those which her truly philanthropic disposition had rendered habitual to her; and it was these benevolent pursuits alone that enabled her to bear up under such a load of anxiety. In the communication of good to others, she found happy intervals from her own sorrows; and though her continued and painful apprehensions for her sister, had stolen the

sweet roses which were wont to spread their celestial colouring over her cheeks, they were occasionally recalled by the grateful acknowledgments of those whom she had relieved or comforted: for her charity was not confined merely to giving food and cloathing; she could also “administer to the diseased mind,” which will not always be found a task so impossible as those who want benevolence or activity to attempt it, may persuade themselves it is. She was returning from a visit of this angelic kind, which she had been paying to the wife of a neighbouring farmer, whose only child was recently dead, when a large packet was put into her hands. She was unacquainted with the hand which directed it, and opened it with some trepidation. She glanced her eye over the letter, which enclosed the other papers: it was signed George Brudenell. Her heart palpitated; and it was several minutes before she could read a word of its contents,

contents, though her eagerness to do so was inconceivable. The letter was as follows:

Llanarvon, October, 18.

“ Dearest Madam,

“ WHEN I had lost the happiness of enjoying your society, your mind was entirely occupied by the melancholy consideration of your sister’s perilous situation; your distress was great; and your uncertainty, with respect to her, since that time, has doubtless been very painful. I can remove that uncertainty, but not entirely relieve your distress. The concern which you have felt for her honour and happiness, will now be lost in your tender anxiety for her health, which, I fear, is an alarming state. Yet let me beseech you, dearest Madam, not to terrify yourself too much. She has the best advice and attendance. Your presence may do much towards restoring her; and that fe-

licity, I know, you will not refuse her. It will be a consolation to you to hear that she has been, during the whole time of her absence from Beechwood, in a creditable family; and her former servant still attends her. She has done nothing that can give room for censure to the malignant part of the world. Let that consideration have its due weight. You will see the lovely Maria, though emaciated by illness, as amiable, as spotless as ever.

“ I WOULD, myself, have brought this intelligence to you; but your sister, whose retreat I discovered by mere accident, condescends to request my stay till your arrival, which it would be unnecessary to hint to so affectionate a sister, should not be delayed. In the mean time, assure yourself and Mrs. Dorville, that nothing, within the power of attentive care, and medical assistance, shall be wanting to forward the dear lady's recovery. The papers which I enclose are
written

written by her: weak as she is, she finished the last sheet this morning.

“PARDON me, dear Madam, for intruding upon you thus long: I know how impatient you will be to open the packet, and will detain you only while I subscribe myself your ever obliged friend and servant,

GEORGE BRUDENELL.

“HARRIS, who brings this, will direct your rout; and I hope to have the happiness of meeting, and conducting you to your sister.”

It is impossible to describe the strong emotions of Arabella's mind on the perusal of this letter: her uncertainty was at an end; Maria was safe; and it was Sir George Brudenell who communicated this happy intelligence. These circumstances would have filled her with rapture, but the cup of delight was rudely dashed from her lips by the
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fearful consideration of her illness: she started at the apprehension of losing her for ever, now that she fondly hoped her speedy restoration. She determined not for a moment to delay giving orders for her journey; and when that was done, she broke the seal of the enclosed packet, and began to read; but was almost immediately interrupted by a summons to Mrs. Dorville's dressing room, which she instantly obeyed; and the moment she beheld her mother, a shower of tears fell from her eyes. "Pardon me, dearest Madam," she cried; "forgive me for thus alarming your. I ought to rejoice that we have found our dear Maria; but she is ill, very ill."

"I KNOW it, my love," answered Mrs. Dorville. "I have a letter from Sir George Brudenell, in which he gives me the particulars of her situation. He mentions your going to her; but I think that would be the greatest imprudence. I know you are far
from

from well, and quite unequal to such a journey. We will send Miss Marshall, and I will spare Williams."

"By no means," replied Arabella, eagerly. "I have already given orders for the chaise to be in readiness, and hope to set out in an hour. Let me intreat you not to oppose my going: my heart is in it, and a delay would make me miserable."

"Well, if you are determined, I give up the point; but do not fright yourself about your sister; her constitution is not so delicate as mine; and I have borne up for years under a heavy load of indisposition. I see you are impatient to be gone, so I will detain you no longer."

"MAY I be the happy announcer of a free pardon to the dear creature?"

"You may say what you please at present, to assist her recovery; but I shall have some conditions to make with her before she returns to Beechwood."

ARABELLA

ARABELLA withdrew to her own apartment; and, after hastily putting on a travelling dress, which Johnson had prepared for her, she sat down once more to read Maria's packet, which began as follows:

" Llanarvon, June 20.

" I HAVE been three days an inhabitant of this wretched place; and have at length determined to begin a letter to you, my Arabella, my dear and only friend, to lay open my heart entirely before you. O, that I had done so long ago; I might then have avoided infinite distress and disgrace; but that was not to be; the unfortunate Maria was devoted to misery from her cradle, or she had never been given into the hands of that hateful woman, with whose detested name she will not contaminate her paper. I say, my dear sister, I will open my heart to you; will tell you all that I have done and suffered in the last long dismal four days. Me-
thinks

thinks they appear four months to me; and it must be so long in reality before what I write reaches you; for I am determined not to make an application even to you, till you have full power to assist me. With you I know the will is never wanting; and when you are of age, I am certain you will free me from the heavy bondage I have so long groaned under: to apply to you before could be of no use; and I should risk consequences which I shudder to think of, in acquainting even you with the place of my retreat.

“ HERE I have, heaven knows, plenty of time upon my hands; and writing to you, when I am tolerably well, will serve to pass a part of it away.

“ I HOPE you have, by this time, received a short letter, which I wrote to ease any apprehensions that you might feel on my account; and I trust, till this reaches you, you will continue to think with tenderness, unmixed with painful anxiety, of your poor Maria.

“ MY

“ My conduct must doubtless appear to you (alas! I have no other friend who is solicitous about it,) very extraordinary; I mean with respect to my leaving Berkley. I will hasten to explain my motives for so doing. Artful, deceitful man! How could I ever be so weak as to put myself into his power! But I was young and unsuspicious, and they experienced in iniquity.

“ I NEED not tell you that I left Beechwood with him; happy in escaping from a chain which had so long fettered me. I considered not the weight of that which I was going voluntarily to put on: I was told that it was only a filken cord; I had a thousand gay scenes placed before my eyes, and expected all my future days to have been one continued round of various pleasure. Full of these expectations, I set out, and, as Berkley was in high spirits, the night flew rapidly away. I was scarcely sensible of any fatigue, when, very early in the morning, we arrived at
Abergavenny,

Abergavenny, where, with abundance of pretended tendernefs, he infifted on my ftopping to take fome refreshment; and, as he left the room to order it, a note, which was drawn from his pocket with his handkerchief, fell on the ground. I took it up, and feeing in was Mrs. Harley's hand, opened it. Guefs what my feelings were when I read thefe words.—The detefted paper now lies before me, and I will tranfcribe it exactly."

" Dear Willy,

" SING *Te Deum* instantly on the receipt of this; for we have gained a compleat victory. She will go off with you this very night. You laughed at me yesterday, when I told you fhe could not hold out above a day or two longer, and fwore fhe was a hard hearted little devil; but I hope you will now own her to be as tender as you could wifh. Be fure to be ready to-night, precifely at ten,
at

at the place appointed. I am full as impatient as you can be to have this business over; for I depend upon your solemn promise of two hundred pounds immediately, and a good round sum as soon as you can conveniently raise it. Whatever I have will be without *encumbrance*, which is more than you can say.—Adieu.—Send a very pretty note in return for this.—Young ladies love passionate admirers.

L. HARLEY.”

“ OH, Arabella! I can convey to you no idea of what I felt during the perusal of this horrid paper. I cannot describe the resentment, the rage which almost burst me. Indeed, I thought I should have died upon the spot; and, perhaps, it would have been well for me, if I had; for it is impossible, after what I have done, that I can ever be happy in this malicious world. Reproach and scorn will still follow me, how cautious soever I
may

may be of my future conduct.—Shocking thought!—How dreadful, how insupportable is my situation!—That Maria Dorville should quit her mother's roof with the most contemptible of men, and flying him, be compelled to take shelter in a mean farm house; nay, think it a felicity to gain admittance there!—O, my sister! I am at this moment in a high fever, and supported by pillows in bed while I write. I am unable to proceed any further at present.—Adieu till to-morrow.

ARABELLA rang impatiently to know whether the chaise was ready; but being informed that it was not, though the servants were getting it as expeditiously as possible, she once again took up the papers, and proceeded with Maria's melancholy account.

June 23.

“ I AM a good deal better than when I laid down my pen on Tuesday; and shall
now

now, I hope, be able to proceed a good way in my narrative; though the recollection of my own folly, and the villainy of Berkley and his sister, irritates me to such a degree, as almost to render me incapable of any thing but bitter, unavailing lamentation."

"WELL, I told you that I read the note, which, with the writer and receiver of it, I would willingly have torn into a thousand pieces. I, however, spared the paper, determining to give it into the wretch's hands, and load him with reproaches the moment he appeared. But a little consideration showed me the folly of such a proceeding. I was resolved, at all events, never to be his wife; and I dreaded to encounter the violence of his temper, if he suspected my resolution. I believed too, that he would stop at nothing to accomplish his purpose; and I knew him to be as artful as he is determined. I therefore attacked him with his own weapon, deceit; and resting my head on my hand,

hand, to conceal my emotion, when he came into the room, complained that I was ill, and insisted on going to bed, and remaining there undisturbed, till I found myself sufficiently refreshed to enable me to proceed with pleasure."

"He consented, though with great unwillingness; and I went up stairs, attended by Hannah, to whom I told the whole affair, and my determination of attempting, at least, to leave the house undiscovered by any one. A promise of large amends in future, induced her to forward my plan, and accompany my flight. I staid in my room till she informed me that I might safely venture down stairs; Berkley being gone out, and most of the family still in bed."

"I STOLE down stairs with even more trepidation than I had done the night before at Beechwood.—I dreaded that he whom I then fled from would appear from every door I passed, and started with terror at every sound.

found. I was somewhat relieved, when we got, unobserved, out of the house; and soon after left the town, which we did by the first road which presented itself; uncertain, and, indeed, careless, whither it led, so it carried me from the object of my aversion.

“THE morning was very close and gloomy, and I was extremely heated and fatigued; but the excess of my apprehensions prevented me from slackening my pace, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Hannah, who was amazed that I was able to go on at such a rate.”

“WE had walked, I am sure, between three and four miles, chiefly along bye roads, and sometimes over fields, and even hedges; for I avoided all houses as much as possible, without seeing a human being, when the thunder began to roll at a distance, and a dreadful storm seemed to threaten us on every side. No house or habitation was within our view, or any shelter, except a large old tree,
and

and even that was far off. We, however, made towards it as fast as we could, the big drops falling fast upon us as we ran. By the time we reached it, our cloaths, almost wet through, became insupportably heavy about us; and, unable to bear their weight, or my own, any longer, I threw myself on the ground; and should have fainted, had not the hartshorn, which Hannah fortunately carried about her, prevented me.

“ THE tree, large and thick as it was, no longer afforded us any shelter; the rain falling upon us in heavier torrents from its leaves: but I had no power to move; the tremendous rattling of the thunder, and the fearful flashing of the lightning, which seemed to set the whole horizon in a blaze, nearly deprived me of my senses; and I sat, I know not how long, in a horrid kind of stupor.

“ OH, my Arabella, had you seen your poor Maria in that dreadful hour! you

would have felt for, you would have pitied her. ‘ Yes, unfortunate sister,’ you would have said, ‘ your sufferings have been sufficient to expiate your fault.’ But this was only the beginning of my sorrows.—Read on, and the melancholy tale will, by degrees, be entirely unfolded.”

HERE Maria ended her account for that day; and Arabella was too much affected to suffer her to proceed to another sheet immediately. She could hardly believe it possible that her sister was now alive, after the account she had just read. Before she could sufficiently compose herself to enable her to look into the packet again, the carriage was at the door; and, after she had, by her mother’s desire, drank a cup of chocolate, she threw herself into it, attended by Johnson, who promised Mrs. Dorville to take all possible care that her lady did not over fatigue herself by her journey.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONTINUATION AND CONCLUSION OF THE
NARRATIVE.

THE chaise was scarce out of the Park, before Arabella took the papers from her pocket, (for she was deeply interested in the affecting relation of Maria,) which thus proceeded.

June 24.

“ At length the storm began to abate; the rain only bore the appearance of a summer shower; and the thunder seemed to pass to a different part of the heavens. My terror also subsided; and I could sufficiently

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collect

collect my ideas to enable me to reflect upon my dismal situation.

“ O, how gloomy did it appear! The passed, present, and future, seemed equally involved in the blackest darkness. I felt myself a poor solitary wretch, wandering in the midst of a cruel, inhospitable world. ‘ I had no place to flee unto;’ and my existence was of consequence to no one upon earth. I was ready to censure Providence, to accuse it of cruelty in not suffering the late storm to put a period to a life so useless to others, so insupportably painful to myself.

“ I AM doubtful whether I should ever have tried to move from that spot, if the repeated intreaties of Hannah had not, through mere weariness of hearing them, compelled me to try to rise; but it was a vain attempt; I could not stand without much difficulty, and was utterly unable to walk.—Again I sunk down on the ground, saying, in a weak despairing accent, ‘ Leave me, leave me to my

my fate. Go you, and seek some means of preserving a life which you think valuable; but I am determined to stay here and die.'

"THE poor girl only answered me with sobs; and in this deplorable situation did we remain some minutes. At length, 'Surely, Madam,' said she, 'we are not in an uninhabited country. I will go, and try if I can find a house.'

"I MADE her no answer, and saw her depart without the smallest emotion. I even hoped to be finally released from all my troubles before she returned. An unusual stiffness in my limbs, which I suppose was occasioned by my extreme fatigue and wetness, I thought a gentle approach of death. I even fancied I perceived his icy touch at my heart, and I felt a kind of gloomy pleasure in the idea.

"BUT, alas! my Arabella, it is not so easy a thing to die.—A violent shivering fit roused, and convinced me that I had more

to suffer: a dreadful pain in my side succeeded, and continued, together with a swimming in my head, to torment me excessively, when, at a distance, I saw Hannah, and some other person approach.

“ NOTWITHSTANDING the resignation, nay, the wish for death which I had boasted, I felt a pleasing flutter at my heart on the appearance of relief: I half raised myself from the ground, and willingly received a glass of wine, which was offered me by a decent looking woman, who accompanied Hannah. I felt myself strengthened by it; and the poor woman assuring me that her house was near, I, with less difficulty than I expected, arose, and, with their assistance, walked to it.

“ IMMEDIATELY, on my arrival at it, they proposed my going to bed, which I was far from averse to; but when, after toiling up a miserable little staircase, I entered a chamber, clean indeed, but mean and comfortless, and
saw

saw a low uncurtained bed, which stood in one corner of it. I threw myself on a chair, and bursting into tears, could not help exclaiming, 'What a poor unfortunate wretch I am!'

"THE poor woman tried to comfort me, by saying that she would get a good fire immediately, and air the best sheets she had, if I would take off my wet cloaths, and go to bed, where she hoped an hour or two's sleep would make me as well as ever; and one of her children should step to town to let my friends, who were doubtless in great pain about me, know where I was.

"THIS awakened all my feelings; my tears flowed afresh; 'I have no friends,' cried I. 'I am the most unhappy of human beings.'

'AH, Madam,' said the poor woman, holding her apron to her eyes, 'if you knew my sorrows, you would not say so.'

'ARE you miserable too?' cried I—

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'I HAVE,

‘ I HAVE, indeed, cause to be so,’ replied she; ‘ such as a lady, like you, can have no notion of.’

‘ WHAT, what is the matter!’ cried I, impatiently—

‘ LORD, Mrs. Williams,’ interrupted Hannah, ‘ don’t go to make my lady’s spirits lower than they are already; but go down, and get a good fire, that we may have our cloaths dry; and bring some of the best things you have for us to put on in the mean time; I am sure I never was in such a pickle in my life: but don’t talk about sending any where; for my lady would not have any body know where we are for all the world.’

“ THE good woman curtesying, withdrew, and returned, soon after, with some decent cloaths, which I was glad to put on, while my own were taken to the fire. Hannah soon after brought up some tea, and bread and butter, which I took a little of, and then lay down, hoping to get some sleep, of which
I stood

I stood greatly in need. The extreme fatigue I had undergone procured me a little; but when I awoke I found myself not at all refreshed; every bone ached; my head and side gave me considerable pain, and I was parched with thirst. I drank plentifully of such tea as I could procure; and, ill as I was, began to enquire how I could proceed on my journey. Mrs. Williams informed me that we were within a quarter of a mile of the great road between Abergavenny and Monmouth; and that, as chaises were frequently passing between those places, we might doubtless get into one that was returning empty, to which of them I pleased."

"THIS plan appeared to suit me very well; and I resolved to go to Monmouth. All places were, indeed, alike to me, so I avoided Beechwood, and encountered not the detested Berkley; out of the probable reach of whose pursuit I hoped another stage or two would carry me.

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" I CONTINUED

“ I CONTINUED very ill most part of the day ; and the good woman of the house expressed so much compassion for me, that I could not help, in my turn, enquiring into the cause of her distress, and offering all the little assistance in my power for its relief.

‘ AH, my dear lady,” said she, “ my grief is past a cure; there is no recalling my poor William from his cold grave—there, there he lies, and I shall never see him any more. On that very bed where you now sit, was my poor husband laid this day five weeks.’

“ I SHUDDERED all over.—

‘ PRAY, Mrs. Williams, say no more about it,’ cried Hannah. ‘ Don’t you see how it shocks my lady?’

‘ Go on, go on,’ said I. ‘ Tell me, had he a long illness?’ Her tears burst forth with violence. ‘ He had no illness, Madam. O, if he had died a natural death, I could have borne it, if it had pleased heaven to take him in the usual way!—But I will tell you how it was.

was. This very day five weeks I went to the fair—O that he had gone in my place! all had then been well—But it was to be, so it is in vain to murmur—I had a pig to sell, and some little matters to buy, which kept me there till late in the day; and, what was worse than all, I had come half a mile out of the town, when it came into my head, that, as I had sold my pig for more by half a crown than I expected, I could afford to take my dear William home a few little fish, of which he was very fond, for his supper. So back I went for them; and, all the way I came home, pleased myself with the thoughts of surprising him with a little unexpected feast. And yet I remember my heart misgave me when I first came in sight of our house: I thought all would not be right; but I never suspected that my only stay and comfort in this world was taken from me!

• Ah, Madam, when I was away, my little Sally fell into a deep pit, which we have

hard by; and the rest of the children ran to their father, who was at work a little way off, to tell him of the matter. He was the fondest of all parents; and running to the water side, jumped in before he had recovered his breath, and never rose again!—O, Madam! methinks I see him now, on that very bed, where he lay cold and lifeless, surrounded by his neighbours, and weeping little ones, at my return.

“If I had come home but an hour sooner, all would have been well; for I had plunged into the water, and he had been alive to work for his poor children, whom I am unable to maintain.”

“I WAS greatly affected by this pathetic tale; and relating it to you has recalled those painful sensations so powerfully that I am unable to proceed.”

ARABELLA’S eyes were full of tears: she laid the papers on her lap for a few moments

to

to recover herself a little, and then proceeded as follows:

June 28.

" I HAVE been very ill since I last laid down my pen; but as it will all be over before you see this, why should I teaze you with the particulars of my complaint? I will proceed with my account, in which I know my dear Arabella will be interested. The melancholy particulars of the poor widow's history did not end here: she informed me that her husband had, till within the last two years, cultivated a small farm, and would have got beforehand in the world, but a new landlord raised their rent to a most unreasonable height, which, with two successive years, in which heavy summer rains flooded all their corn and grafs, had disabled them from paying their rent at the usual time; and the cruel owner of the farm seizing, a few weeks after it became due, their little
stock,

stock, and the furniture of their house, was sold for less than half their value; and the unfortunate couple, with seven young children, obliged to take shelter in the cottage in which I found them, where, by the unre-mitted industry of the father, they were enabled to live in tolerable comfort and plenty, till the unfortunate accident which deprived them of his support.

“ I ENQUIRED by what means she now procured bread for so large a family; and she informed me, with many tears, that her brother, who was bailiff to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, not liking that she should apply to a parish for relief, allowed them a weekly sum out of his small savings, which, with what little she could get, and the sale of a few unnecessary articles, which she had saved from the wreck of their little property, had hitherto maintained them.

“ O, MY sister, what a melancholy detail was this! My own misfortunes diminished
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ed to my view, as I reflected on those of this poor creature; and I determined to bear up under them with more fortitude than I had hitherto done.

“ IT was a long and dismal day that I spent in this habitation of sorrow, and it was succeeded by a restless and uneasy night. Early in the morning I dispatched Mrs. Williams to the road side to watch for a chaise; and she was fortunate enough, in little more than an hour, to stop one that was on its return to Monmouth. With her assistance, and that of Hannah, I contrived to walk to it; and, after promising to be a friend to her in future, and making her a small present, my own occasions not suffering me to spare much, I got into the carriage, and bidding Hannah draw up the blinds, we went on towards Monmouth.

“ I HAD been hitherto unable to form any plan for my future conduct; but being pressed by my companion to tell her where, or to whom

whom I intended going, I informed her that the only situation I should judge retired enough for my present purpose, was an obscure farm house, at some miles distance from any town. If I could be fortunate enough to get into such a place, I would take another name, and by telling a few particulars of a feigned story, hoped to remain concealed for the next four months; at the end of which time you would come of age; and I well knew would do all in your power to make me easy.

“ My Abigail thought my scheme a very strange one, and was sure I should be heartily tired of it, before one month came to an end; but if I was absolutely resolved to try, she believed she could point out a house that would answer my description, and where I should be very willingly received: for within fifteen miles of the town we were going to, an old fellow servant of her's, who had married a farmer, lived, and, as the situation of
their

their house was very remote, she thought I might stay there securely as long as I pleased.

“ THIS was a most agreeable piece of intelligence to me; and ill, and fatigued as I was, when we got to Monmouth, I immediately ordered another chaise; and taking a glass of wine and water, and a biscuit, set out as soon as it was ready.

“ THE last five miles of the road was very disagreeable and tedious, the house being situated at the further end of a narrow valley, which winds between two high hills; and part of it so steep and stony, that it was hardly possible for a carriage to pass along. It was, however, admirably well calculated for the purpose I wished, that of concealment; and the gloomy barren appearance of the mountains rather seemed to sooth my melancholy, than disgust me, as they would have done in happier days. About six in the evening I got to the end of my journey, and was carried out of the chaise more dead than alive.

“ THE

“ THE people of the house seemed all astonishment at our appearance. But Hannah soon explained matters to Mrs. Jones, the mistress of it, who, she told me, she was certain could keep a secret. Indeed, she said they had both been practised in that art when they had lived together in the family of Sir James Brown; the whole employment of Lady Brown, and her daughter, being to deceive the old Baronet, which they chiefly effected by the address and contrivance of Mrs. Jones, who waited on the young lady.

“ THIS account, though it gave me no very favourable opinion of my hostess, made me tolerably easy for myself; for I concluded money would do every thing with one of her stamp. As soon as a room could be got ready for me, I went to bed; but was in too high a fever to get much rest. The following morning, however, I sat up in bed, to write the letter which, I trust, you have long since received; and Mrs. Jones, who, I find, indeed,

indeed, very ready in expedients, enclosed it in one to her sister in London, from whence it was to be forwarded to you.

July 2.

“ A WHOLE week has elapsed since I last addressed my dear Arabella. I have been very feverish and indifferent, and at times very low spirited: but I now feel myself, upon the whole, lighter and easier than I have before done since I left Beechwood. Hitherto, all that I have written has been dismal and gloomy, such as Miss Marshall would delight to read from me. Perhaps I may now write in a livelier stile; the pen-soso is not natural to me; and I know my Arabella will rejoice to see the change.

“ I MUST own that I am yet far from well: I have frequent pains in my side; and my cough and hoarseness are as bad as ever; but my spirits are sometimes very good; and I now hope to live, and get the better
of

of all who rejoice in my disgrace. I think I could at this instant face Berkley and his hateful sister, and glory in have disappointed their selfish, artful schemes.—O, why are not the four tedious months of my probation at an end, and I at liberty to fly to your arms, my true friend, my only sister!—You, and you alone, shall be the guide of my future life. I will be the wax in your hand; and you shall mould me into what form you please; so may I hope by degrees to be all that you wish me.

“ But I have not yet told you how very ill I was the day after I came here; that I so entirely exhausted myself with writing to you, that I fainted before I finished the letter. Mrs. Jones and Hannah were so alarmed for me, that they prevailed upon me to let them send for an apothecary, from a small town in the neighbourhood, of whom they have a high opinion. I at first objected to the proposal, fearing my retreat might be discovered

covered by his means; but they said the tale which had been told in the family, which was, that I was a distant relation of Mrs. Jones's, come down from London in a bad state of health, for the benefit of the Welsh air, would as fully satisfy him, as it had done them."

"He was accordingly sent for; and, ill as I was, I could scarce forbear laughing at the grotesque appearance he made, and the mixture of obsequiousness and conceit which was discernable even in his first bow. He is a thin shrivelled man, of about sixty; his features remarkably plain, but rendered infinitely more disgusting by the absurd grimace which was continually moving upon them; his shoulders missed no opportunity of rising into the most ridiculous shrug that can be imagined; and his head, accustomed, no doubt, to the important shake, which is expected by his country patients while they are telling him their aches and pains, never stood still,

still, and actually gave him the exact appearance of the manderin on the parlour chimney piece of our good old nurse. He was dressed in a blue coat, which was finely contrasted by a waistcoat, the colour of which was so bright and glowing a crimson, that I think it might have superceded the necessity of a fire in the coldest day in January, by the ideal heat which it would occasion in all beholders: a large curled wig, most exactly powdered, and a gold headed riding cane, crowned the whole.

UNDERSTANDING that I was a relation of Mrs. Jones's, he treated me with very little ceremony; and assured me, if I would be entirely guided by him, he had no doubt of perfectly restoring me; 'Though,' added he with a grin, 'ladies, at your time of life, sometimes want the assistance of younger practitioners than myself.' Then winking, 'Ha! Mrs. Jones! is not there something of this kind in the case?'

‘ MY cousin, Sir,’ answered she, ‘ is too prudent, I hope, to have any love affair on her hands as yet; it is very early in life for her to think of such matters.’

‘ WELL, well,’ shaking his head, with redoubled velocity, ‘ It may be so; I have no wish to pry into private affairs; though I heard Miss spoke of before I was sent for; I have no curiosity; but you know, Mrs. Jones, the more one knows of a case, the better able one is to prescribe for it.’

‘ VERY true, Sir,’ answered she. ‘ You have always good reasons for what you do; but I believe Miss Davis’s fever arises entirely from the wetting I mentioned to you.’

‘ O, VERY likely, very likely; you have no bad notion in these matters. Wettings frequently produce colds, and colds generate fevers, of which there are an infinite variety.—You understand me, ladies?” looking round with an air of much consequence: these fevers branch out into an infinitude of disorders,

disorders, all equally threatening the human frame, which is exquisitely fine in the texture of its parts, with final and irremediable dissolution. This it is the business of us medical professors to prevent; and I think, Mrs. Jones, I may say, without vanity, that I have been as successful in the fever line, as any man in the principality: but' taking out an enormous silver watch, 'I have an infinite deal of business upon my hands, and must hurry away. You may depend, Miss, notwithstanding the extreme sickness of the time, upon constant attendance, and all that I can do for you. I will send my boy with a cooling draught to-night.'

"So much for Dr. Price; who has really afforded me so much diversion, that I could not resist the pleasure of giving you a sketch of him. He has sent me an amazing quantity of medicines; some of which I have taken, and I believe with good effect; but had I swallowed the whole, I am persuaded I must have been poisoned.

" MY spirits begin to fail, and I must lay down my pen for the present.

July 7.

" I HAVE now told my dear Arabella every thing material which has happened to me since the unfortunate night on which I left Beechwood. But why do I call the time unfortunate, when I escaped from my tyrant? Tirefome and melancholy as the life I now lead is, I prefer it a thousand times to living in a palace with her. I have solemnly determined never to enter the house she inhabits, what ever may be the consequence.

" WHAT I chiefly lament is that I was so miserably deceived and duped by that vile brother and sister; yet they have now no reason to triumph in my credulity; their artifices have ended, thank heaven, in their own confusion as well as mine. But I always dreaded the ridicule of the world more than

its censure, and that, I fear, has fallen heavily upon me; perhaps it will follow me through life, and how shall I be able to endure that! O, my sister, you, who have happily never erred, can form no idea of what I feel! A thousand considerations unite to weigh me down. I know the inflexibility of my mother's temper; she will never forgive, never receive me as her child; and her severity will lead every one to imagine me more criminal than I am.—*You*, only you, will comfort and console me. Nay, I am sometimes almost tempted to doubt the continued love of my Arabella! O, wretched, undone Maria! if she forsakes thee, thou art lost indeed!—But that cannot be; your goodness, your benevolence is inexhaustible. How many instances have I seen of your wonderful forbearance, even towards those who have endeavoured to repay your benefits with injury!—When I, full of resentment, have intreated you to leave such ungrateful wretches to their
own

own detestable ways, how have you condescended to plead their ignorance, the force of evil habits early acquired, and the false medium through which many things are viewed by uneducated and uninformed minds, in extenuation of their crimes; and even sought further opportunities of heaping more good upon them, in hopes, at length, to soften their unfeeling minds! O, my sister, you are unwearied in well doing; and, in due time, great will be your reward. I can at a distance admire, but scarce dare think of imitating you. You are superior to the world, and the littleness of its resentments, while I am agitated by every idle word that the malicious, or even the thoughtless, speak concerning me. I want that strength of mind which you so eminently possess; and in wanting that, I lose all that gives dignity to human nature.

“MR. Price, whom I before mentioned to you, still attends me, and pretends to be

greatly alarmed for me, fearing an approaching consumption, and talks of a milk diet, and riding on horseback. Mrs. Jones and Hannah join him in teasing me to try those grand specifics, as he calls them; but you know I had always an aversion to milk; and I have not spirits to think of mounting one of their great cart horses; though the good man of the house offers to leave his plow and cart on purpose to escort me; and they even proposed Hannah's attending on a little poney. What a ludicrous appearance we should make! I should be shocked to be seen in such a situation even by the neighbouring clowns. Besides, I am sure the exercise would be too much for me; for I am really very weak; and if a violent fit of laughing should seize me when on horseback, what should I do?

“ I HAVE this morning desired that nothing more may be said about this foolish proposal: I will go on as well as I can till
the

the end of these tedious four months, and then fly to my Arabella, who will cure all my pains at once. I will lay my aching head on her soft bosom, where I know it will find ease. As soon as you come of age, you will doubtless go to your sweet house in Dorsetshire, according to your long settled plan, for some weeks at least: there I mean to meet you; and there will I remain, while Miss Marshall continues an inhabitant of Beechwood.

“ O, SWEET month of November, thou shalt never be held gloomy in my imagination!—If every thing answers to my wish, and I meet my beloved Arabella at Cranbrook, the anniversary of that day shall be a festival with me as long as I live. We will erect a beautiful temple there, and dedicate it to fraternal friendship. — I am charmed with the idea: methinks my spirits seem to rise and expand themselves in my bosom.—Why do I ever give way to melancholy,

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choly, when I have such delicious prospects before me? Pardon me, my sister, for the gloom which the perusal of what I have written will cast upon a mind which deserves uninterrupted sunshine: I trust it will be but temporary, and that it will be the last pain your Maria will cost you.—Yes, I now feel an assurance that all will end well, that we shall yet be happy.

“ SHOULD any more fits of low spirits return to torment me, I am resolved their baleful influence shall extend no further than myself.—Sleep, my tired pen; sleep for three long months.—Would that she who now guides thee could do the same, how many tedious, painful hours would it save her!

“ ADIEU, my friend; my Arabella, farewell.

October 18.

“ AGAINST my will, against my solemn determination, I am, in a manner, compelled

pelled to write to my Arabella. In another fortnight I should have done it with pleasure; now it is irksome to me; but Sir George Brudenell will have it so.

“ My retreat has been prematurely discovered: he is purchasing an estate here, and came most unexpectedly to view it. I had been tempted, by the fineness of yesterday, to attempt taking a walk round the garden; and was returning to the house, supported by Mrs. Jones and Hannah, (for I am excessively weak,) when he rode up to the door. He did not, at first, recollect me; and I might, perhaps, have escaped his notice, had not my confusion betrayed me. I was so much agitated, (indeed, the least thing you can imagine now, throws me into a tremor,) that I was unable to walk; which, when he perceived, he instantly alighted, and catching me in his arms, carried me, perfectly insensible, into the house.

“ THEY tell me that it was long e’er I recovered. When I first opened my eyes, this most amiable of men was standing by me, his looks expressing all the anxiety of a brother. He soothed me with all the tenderness of that relation; and, as I could bear it, talked of my mother, of you, of the grief and solicitude you had manifested on my account.

“ O, ARABELLA, I have been for a long time so unaccustomed to writing, that even these few lines have fatigued and exhausted me beyond measure—I must stop for the present.

Three in the afternoon.

“ SIR George wished me to have sent my packet off without adding another word; but I must tell you how very good he has been to me. You, you alone could have done more. He had not been an hour in the house, before he dispatched one of his own
servants

fervants to Hereford for the most eminent physician there; and soon after sent for Price, to examine him himself on the particulars of my case, and what had been done for me. I know he thinks me a great deal worse than I am. Though he does every thing he can to keep up my spirits, yet I am very, very ill! But a consumption is such a lingering disorder, that a delay of a fortnight could have made no difference, as I have often told Mrs. Jones and Hannah, when they pressed me to send to you. But he will not allow me even to wait till another day before I send this, and says he is sure you will come here immediately. But do not hurry and fatigue yourself; a day or two will make no difference; yet I am impatient, anxiously impatient to see you.

“SIR George would have gone himself express to Beechwood with my packet, and attended you back; but I find such relief, such pleasure, in his society, after the dismal

mal life I have led so long, that I cannot resolve to deprive myself of it; yet I am selfish in this; but you will excuse it; I have few enjoyments.

“ How strange it was that Sir George should hear at Llangorwel, that I had written to tell you the place of my retreat, and that you concealed the letter: it must be an invention of Mrs. Harley’s; even you cannot escape the effects of her malignity.

“ OH, my dear sister, adieu. Wonder not at these straggling lines; my hand shakes, and the paper dances before my eyes—Say something for me to my dear mother; you know what would be right: my head turns round, and I can only say that I am her dutiful, and your ever grateful, ever affectionate

MARIA DORVILLE.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONTAINS SOMETHING WHICH, CANNOT FAIL TO
DRAW THE TEAR OF SENSIBILITY FROM THE
EYE OF THE READER
FOR THE FATE OF THE UNFORTUNATE MARIA.

MY gentle reader will feel for the pangs which were inflicted on the susceptible Arabella, by the perusal of Maria's sad narrative. All the fears which Sir George's letter had raised, were confirmed and realized by it. Her imagination pictured a sister, on whom she doated, and whose misfortunes had only served to increase her tenderness and affection for her, expiring before her; an early victim to the caprice of others and her

own imprudence. Her heart was pierced, was agonized with the idea; yet it unceasingly presented itself, during the whole of her melancholy journey, which she pursued with such expedition, that she arrived at Monmouth by five in the afternoon; and, notwithstanding Johnson's remonstrances, gave orders for fresh horses to be immediately put to the chaise.

WHILE this was doing, Sir George Brudenell arrived; and seeing Mrs. Dorville's chaise in the inn yard, sent instantly to request admittance to Arabella. She had impatiently wished to see him; yet her heart sunk within her when he approached. He was little less affected; and taking her hand, without speaking, her terror increased; and, in a voice scarce articulate, she exclaimed, "She is dead! she is dead!" and fainted in his arms.

By the assistance of Johnson, and the mistress of the house, she was, in a few minutes, restored

restored to her senses: and before she was able to speak, her expressive eyes seemed to ask, yet dread a confirmation of her fears. "Your sister still lives," cried Sir George. "Be comforted, she now expects your arrival."

ARABELLA'S eyes, and one of her fair hands, were lifted up to heaven, in a token of thankfulness for some moments; then turning to the Baronet, "Oh, Sir, this is not a time to tell you how deeply I feel the obligations we owe you: I can only now in-treat you to add to them, by informing me, whether there is a hope, a possibility of her recovery?"

"A HOPE there must be," replied he, "while life remains: but I will not deceive you; I fear there is little probability of it; yet," observing her colour alter, "your presence may produce a happy change, a turn in her disorder."

O, THAT

“ O, THAT it may !” cried Arabella fervently ; “ that the life of this dear creature may be granted to my prayers, how blessed, how grateful should I be !”

THEN, after a pause of a few minutes, she enquired whether the carriage was ready, declaring herself perfectly able to proceed on her journey. Sir George, however, persuaded her to take some refreshment ; and then ordering another chaise for Johnson, himself attended her in her’s.

DURING their journey to Llanarvon, Sir George endeavoured, by every means in his power, to arm and prepare his fair companion for the sight of the altered and emaciated Maria, and for the shock which he feared would soon succeed their meeting, their final separation ; which to him appeared inevitable. Nor were his kind compassionate efforts lost upon Arabella ; she was consoled and greatly armed by them ; and, as she approached the house which contained
the

the dear object of her anxious concern, felt a composedness, a strength of mind, which she had almost despaired of attaining on this trying occasion.

THEY alighted from the carriage before it reached the house; and Sir George, leaving Johnson to take care of her lady, went himself to prepare Maria for seeing her.

THE moment he entered the room where she was sitting, her eyes were turned towards him with inexpressible eagerness; and she suddenly exclaimed, "Is she come?"

SHE was attempting to rise; but he prevented her. "She is coming; she will be here soon; but you must be more composed before you can receive her; you must drink a glass of water, with some drops, and eat a biscuit."

"OH, I cannot eat; it would choak me; but I will try to swallow the drops. Now," having drank them, "how far off is she?"

"SHE

“ SHE is coming up the road, and by this time within sight of the house. You will see her in a few minutes; but be more calm; her spirits are almost as weak as your’s.”

“ OH, I cannot be calm; I tremble with impatience!”

SIR George saw it was vain to delay their interview any longer; and going towards the door; “ She is in the house by this time; I will bring her to you.”

THE moment he opened it, Arabella, who had waited some minutes for admittance, eagerly, though in a whisper, enquired if she might go in. He took her hand, and tenderly kissing it, “ be calm, be composed, dearest creature, and you shall.”

IN a moment the sisters were locked in each others arms. Sir George stood by them, fearful of the effect of transports too violent for the weak emaciated state of one, at least, of them. They sunk down on a couch
which

which stood near; and the head of Maria reclining on the heaving bosom of her sister, both dissolved in tears.

O, YE selfish and avaricious, ye hard and insensible of heart, could ye unmoved have witnessed such a scene? No, it is impossible; ye must have been melted; and it would have conveyed a lesson which you might ever have remembered with thankfulness. It would have taught you to feel the tender luxury of sympathy; and the delicious tear of sensibility would have fallen from your eyes.

SIR George was extremely affected; and bidding Johnson be in readiness, in case she was wanted, strolled into the garden for a quarter of an hour. As soon as he found himself tolerably recovered, he returned to the parlour. The sisters were still in the same situation, but appeared more composed. Maria, in broken sentences, for she breathed and spoke with difficulty, was endeavouring to express the gratitude she felt for the
goodness

goodness of her sister; and Arabella, hanging fondly over her, was trying to console and cheer her, by the tenderest expressions of love. Sir George seating himself by them, took a hand of each, and, with a more than fraternal affection, administered relief to both.

IN this manner near two hours passed away, when the Physician, who was retained by Sir George, arrived, and, at Maria's request, was desired to walk in. "Well, Sir," said she, as he entered; "you see me now as happy as this world can make a person in my condition: I have the best of sisters, and of friends; they do every thing to make me wish for life: yes, Sir, I do earnestly wish for it, if heaven sees fit to indulge me with it; and I want to know from you, whether it is probable."

"LET me first ask you, my dear young lady," said he, "how you feel yourself; are you tolerably easy?"

"AH,

“ AH, Sir!” answered she, laying her hand upon her breast!

“ I do not like to pronounce,” continued the Doctor; “ but,” looking at his watch, “ it is past nine o’clock; you must go to bed; I hope a little sleep will refresh you.”

“ INDEED I cannot go, unless you both,” looking at Sir George and her sister, “ will come and sit by me there; for I have much to say to you; and, perhaps,” again laying her hand on her breast, “ I may have no other opportunity.”

“ WE will do every thing you wish, my love,” said Arabella, rising; “ suffer me to help you to walk up stairs.”

WITH the assistance of Hannah she was soon undressed; and had not been in bed many minutes, before she desired that the Doctor and Sir George might be called in.

It was sometime, after they came, before she could speak; but, at length, addressing
the

the Physician, "Do you think I shall out live this night?"

"DEAR Madam," he answered, "in your disorder it is impossible to give any opinion."

"ENOUGH, enough, Sir," said she, waving her hand; "I understand you, and," looking up, "I am resigned.—I hoped, my sister, to have rejoiced in your presence many days. I had not the least suspicion of my danger till your anxiety," turning to Sir George, "alarmed me.—Even this morning I thought of living; but," again looking up, "it is ordered otherwise."

THEN, after a pause, "While I am able, let me thank you, my sister, and you, Sir," giving a hand to each, "for all your goodness to me. God will repay you—he only can."

SHE ceased to speak; and a moment after, her soul escaping from the frail tenement
which

which it had inhabited, took its flight to the region of spirits.

THE whole attention of the Physician, and more especially of Sir George, was now turned to Arabella, who sat motionless on the side of the bed. No tear visited her eye, nor did a sound proceed from her lips. The Doctor ordered her to be immediately undressed, and put to bed; but when her servants attempted to remove her for that purpose, she opposed them, and laying her cheek on the lifeless hand of Maria, made signs to them to leave her.

SIR George was greatly alarmed, and kneeling down by her, in words the most soothing, intreated her to submit to what was judged necessary for her safety. He reminded her of her mother, and the care she ought to take of her own health in duty to her. This argument drew her attention, and, after passionately kissing the hand which she had held, she arose, and turning hastily towards

wards Sir George, as if doubtful of her resolution, suffered him to lead her to another room.

SHE was scarce seated there, before a plentiful shower of tears gave some ease to her before almost bursting heart. The Doctor declared this a most favourable circumstance, and ordering her to take some hartshorn and water, and go immediately to bed, both gentleman retired, after giving directions to Mrs. Johnson to be attentively watchful over her lady, and apply for advice and assistance, if she perceived the least alteration for the worse.

BEFORE Sir George went to bed, he wrote a short letter to Miss Marshall, communicating the fatal event which had just happened, and begging her to inform Mrs. Dorville of it in the most cautious manner possible. This he sent off express; and then softly approaching the door of Arabella's room, stood to listen whether any thing moved,

moved, but all was silent: the curtains, which were drawn around her bed, even prevented one of the sighs, with which her gentle bosom every minute heaved, from reaching his ear; and hoping her sorrow was for the present suspended by a soft slumber, he retired to his own apartment, his spirits greatly depressed by the affecting scene he had just been witness to. The fair flower which had so lately fallen from its stalk, lived fresh in his remembrance, and he sincerely deplored its premature end.

BUT she was not the only object of his anxiety; he felt that his admiration of, and attachment to, the lovely Arabella, increased every hour; and viewing her in the light he did, as the destined wife of another, he was alarmed at its progress, and sincerely wished to check it: for he had no doubt but her engagement with the Duke of Dunbeath still subsisted, and concluded his absence occasioned, and their marriage necessarily delayed,

layed, by the recent death of his brother. How many cruel pangs did this mistaken idea cost him in that sleepless night!

O, UNFORTUNATE, ill-fated Brudenell!—would he cry,—now that thou hast found a woman who answers thy warmest, thy most romantic ideas of perfection, thou art but too certain that, all amiable as she is, her existence must cause thy misery! never, never, can that invaluable heart be thine; it is pledged, it is given to another. Cold friendship is all that remains for thee; but does not even that convey an exquisite delight? I feel that it does, but is it not therefore dangerous?

I MUST again quit this angelic creature, whose excellence is my bane. I will only see her safe in her own habitation, and then fly from her, till time and reason have enabled me, if such a change is possible, to view her with indifference.

THE light of day roused Sir George from his painful contemplations; and he waited impatiently for Johnson's coming out of her lady's room, to hear how she had rested. He met her with the most eager enquiries; but received no pleasing information: she had not closed her eyes all night, and was at that time very feverish.

DOCTOR H. was immediately called, and, after visiting her for a few minutes, he made up a composing draught for her; for he always carried a small quantity of the most necessary and efficacious medicines with him, when he went far from home, fearing the effects of the pernicious succedaneums which are sometimes substituted by ignorant country apothecaries.

THIS draught had the desired effect; about ten o'clock she fell asleep, and did not awake till near four in the afternoon; soon after which time she arose, and finding herself

better, though not able to leave her room, she desired to see both gentlemen there.

THEY obeyed her summons, and rising, at their entrance, she thus addressed them, with a graceful and affecting solemnity.

My obligations to you both, to you, Sir," to the Baronet, " most particularly, are such as I want words to express my sense of. When I stood most in need of friendly consolation, you humanely and zealously administered it to me; and by your means I have been able to go through a trial, which I had, without it, been unequal to. Accept my warmest, my most grateful acknowledgments; and be assured I shall ever retain the liveliest remembrance of your goodness. But let me not too far encroach upon your friendship: all that I have now to do, is to confirm my mind in a perfect submission to the Divine Will, and that I trust I shall be enabled to do."

THE pale and altered, though exquisitely interesting, countenance of Arabella, as she pronounced these words, and the composed solemnity of her manner, struck Sir George most forcibly. He was too much affected to give an immediate answer; and the Doctor, though innured, by his profession, to scenes of distress, was greatly moved.—“When, Madam,” said he, “do you propose to leave this place; I think you cannot go too soon.”

“Not till I attend her on whose account I came hither; we will go together.” Here a shower of tears interrupted her words; but she again proceeded, “your goodness, in taking upon yourselves the care of ordering her removal, was truly kind.”

“I do not approve of your plan at all,” said the Doctor. “Be persuaded, dear lady, to set out towards Beechwood early to-morrow morning; or, if you are unable to do that, stay till the following day.”

"No, Sir; I can neither leave or stay behind her. I must be indulged in this wish of my heart."

"You must, you shall, do every thing that you desire," said Sir George. "To a common mind such an indulgence might be improper; but you have fortitude to support you in whatever you undertake. I will attend this dear lady myself," turning to the Doctor, "and be answerable for the consequences."

"Well, Sir," answered the Physician, "I acquiesce; though I still think the experiment a dangerous one."

"By no means," said Arabella, struggling for composure. "I feel myself now tolerably well; and, after the refreshment of another night's repose, shall be able to give the last proof, that will ever be in my power, of my attachment to the dear creature we have lost."

THE Doctor then proceeded to ask her how she had rested, what nourishment she had taken, &c. and coffee was soon after brought up; but she seemed little refreshed by it: indeed, the restraint which she evidently imposed upon herself, to appear calm while they were with her, was so painful, that they left her very early in the evening, fearing to deprive her of the relief which a free indulgence of her tears might afford.

SIR George had with difficulty prevailed upon the Doctor to stay one night more; a compliance which, on account of his extensive practice, it was very inconvenient to him to make, though assured that any recompence he could name would be gladly made. Both gentlemen retired to the parlour, and were silently employed; one in considering the cases of patients, whom he had been unwillingly obliged to neglect; and the other in reflecting on the melancholy situation of the beloved of his heart, and accusing the

F 3

malignity

malignity of his fate, which forbid him to devote that, as well as every future, moment of his life, to her consolation and comfort, when Mrs. Hannah, gently opening the door, begged the favour of speaking to him.

“O, SIR,” said she, in a whisper, the moment they were alone, “Mrs. Johnson sent me to let you know that Miss Dorville, notwithstanding all she can say, will go into my dear dead lady’s room; and she begs you will come and try to keep her away; for she is sure she can never bear such a dreadful sight. Do, good Sir, hasten, for heaven’s sake, or they will be gone before you come up.”

“I know not,” said Sir George, “whether I dare intrude upon her sorrow on so affecting an occasion; I cannot venture to oppose her.”

“ONLY, good Sir, let me intreat you to come up stairs. Suppose she should fall into fits; what should I do? for Johnson is al-

most

most as ill as her lady; besides, you have more influence with her than any other person."

HE followed her silently to the door of Maria's chamber, where a sight presented itself which fixed him immovable as a statue. Arabella was kneeling on the ground, close to the coffin where the still beautiful, though inanimate, body of her sister was deposited. Her hands were clasped; and she looked alternately on the pale face, and up to heaven, in speechless agony. Johnson sat on a chair behind, holding a handkerchief to her face, and endeavouring to suppress the sobs which, notwithstanding her efforts, burst from her every minute: but they did not disturb her lady; she did not hear them. Sometimes her lips would move; and at length she uttered, in a low, but fervent, voice, "O, thou in whom my trust has ever been reposed, hear my prayer, grant my petition! Let me meet this darling of
F 4 heart

heart in those blessed regions which thou hast prepared for those that love thee, and there rejoice with her, for ever, and ever."

SHE continued in silent prayer for several minutes, and then fondly, and repeatedly, kissing the hands, the lips, and forehead of her sister, seemed preparing to depart. Sir George retired unperceived by her. She arose, and, after standing a minute, as if to indulge herself with a last look, hurried out of the room.

THE Baronet, more strongly affected, if possible, than he had yet been, and full of the image of the lovely mourner, would have withdrawn from all eyes, to indulge himself in reflecting upon it; but his fears for what might be the effect of these violent emotions upon so delicate a frame, induced him to go and inform Dr. H. of what he had just seen and heard. The good Physician seemed greatly hurt. "This young lady," said he, "will trifle away her life, as her sister has just

just done, if she goes on in this manner. How can she expect a quiet night after such agitation of mind; nothing but laudanum will procure her sleep. Her grief is not of the usual kind; I should be less alarmed if it were more boisterous."

"It does not act upon a common mind," replied Sir George. "She bears up under it with a dignity which I never saw equalled."

"THE Doctor made no answer; he was impatient to be at home; and feared another bad night might render a still longer attendance upon Miss Dorville unavoidable. But his fears were unnecessary; Arabella's fever had abated very much; and, with the assistance of another draught, she slept tolerably well.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ARRIVAL OF THE REMAINS OF THE UNFORTUNATE
MARIA AT BEECHWOOD;

WITH THEIR INTERMENT, AND OTHER
INTERESTING MATTER.

ABOUT ten the next morning the Doctor, amply recompensed, was suffered to depart; and by eleven the melancholy procession was in readiness to do the same. The chaise, which conveyed Arabella and Sir George, in compliance with her desire, moved at the same solemn pace, only keeping about a quarter of a mile before the rest. He exerted every effort in his power, during the journey, to alleviate her sorrow; endeavouring

vouring to draw her attention from the affecting contemplation of her family, by talking of his own; of the early loss which he had sustained in a worthy father, and the admirable qualities of his mother, whose eulogy he was ever delighted to pronounce. Of the care she bestowed, in his earliest years, to form his mind to virtue; and the active part she had taken in his education: of her long illness, and the fortitude with which she bore it; and, at last, quitted a world, to which she had given so bright an example.—These subjects, at the same time that they soothed Arabella's melancholy, could not fail to interest her, which few others would have done at that time; and Sir George felt so exquisite a pleasure in pouring balm upon her wounded mind, that, though they proceeded so slowly as not to arrive at Monmouth till after three o'clock, he thought it the shortest stage he ever travelled in his life, and was both surprized and grieved to find himself at the end of it.

HAVING given Harris directions respecting the numerous train which followed them, Sir George conducted his fair companion into a room as remote as possible from the street, and ordered some refreshments to be brought in by her own servants; for, ever attentive to what might in the smallest degree affect her, he judged it improper for any others, at this time, to approach her. He had scarce given these directions, when he was informed that a lady, who was just arrived, begged to be admitted to Miss Dorville; and a moment after Miss Lewis appeared.

SIR George would gladly have excused so unlooked for an intrusion; but it was impossible to avoid introducing her, and she was led by him into the parlour. Arabella at first imagined her coming to be accidental; but she informed her, that, happening to be at Beechwood when the last express arrived, she had witnessed Mrs. Dorville's distress; and,

and, to alleviate the anxiety she was under, had offered to set out immediately, to give her all the comfort and consolation in her power.

THOUGH Arabella did not wish for such a companion at this time as Miss Lewis, she was obliged by the kindness of her intention. "You are very good," said she, "to undertake so melancholy an office; the affectionate attentions of my friends must be ever grateful to me. I almost dread to ask you how my dear mother bore so sudden, so dreadful a shock?"

"SHE was very much affected, to be sure," answered Miss Lewis; "but a large part of her concern was for you, and that I was happy enough to lessen."

"OH, she must have suffered greatly," answered Arabella. "How differently did I hope to have conducted my Maria home!" Here tears stopped her utterance; and Miss Lewis, who was not devoid of feeling, wept with her.

THE evening, for the day was too far advanced for them to think of proceeding further that night, passed heavily away with them all. The common place consolation which was offered by Miss Lewis, rather fatigued than relieved Arabella; yet, as it was well intended, she concealed her disgust; only begging to retire very early to her apartment, that, by setting out soon in the morning, they might be able to reach Beechwood the following night.

AFTER a tedious and melancholy day's journey, at the close of the evening, they approached near the place of their destination. The bells of the neighbouring church tolled solemnly as they passed near it. Arabella was violently agitated, that it was with difficulty they prevented her from fainting as they drove slowly up the Park. She entered the house supported by Sir George and Miss Lewis; but at the sight of Miss Marshall, who officiously came to meet her in the hall, the

the little strength she had forsook her; and she sunk insensibly in their arms.

THE house was a scene of silent terror and confusion. The servants who saw the condition of their young lady, magnified her danger to the rest; some thought her dying, and others lamented her as actually dead.

By degrees, however, she recovered her senses, and desired to be conducted to her mother's dressing room, whither she was unable to go without assistance. Their meeting was tender and affecting. But Mrs. Dorville's grief was not of the severest kind. Arabella had always been her favourite; and Miss Marshall had of late done much towards depriving her youngest daughter of the small share she once possessed in her affections. She was soon composed enough to desire that Miss Lewis and Sir George might be requested to walk up, which they accordingly did; and she was profuse in her acknowledgments to both, for their attentions to Arabella.

HER daughter's looks spoke much, and eloquently, when they were turned towards the Baronet; but she said very little.

SIR George felt more forcibly than ever the necessity of an immediate escape from her fascinating presence; and, after assuring them, with an earnestness which showed his words the genuine offspring of his heart, that he should ever esteem opportunities of being serviceable to them the greatest felicities of his life, he arose, and addressing Arabella, "Now I have the happiness, dearest Madam, to see you safe under the maternal roof, and no longer in a situation to need any assistance in my power to give, I will tear myself from you." His heart spoke more forcibly, in the last expression, than he intended it should. "I will set out for London early to-morrow morning, hoping for your permission to address a few lines to you from thence to enquire after your health, which I shall be most anxious to hear a favourable account of."

ARABELLA bowed.—“ I hope,” said Mrs. Dorville, “ Sir George Brudenell can need no assurance that we shall esteem ourselves happy to see or hear from him.”

“ DID you say that you would go *early* to-morrow?” cried Arabella, in a tremulous tone. “ Could you but indulge me in one more request?”

“ I ANTICIPATE it, dearest Madam,” interrupted he. “ Forgive me that I gave you the pain of mentioning what ought to have occurred to me; I will defer my departure till noon.”

“ I CANNOT thank you,” said Arabella: “ your goodness out-runs my expressions.”

“ YOUR acceptance of my wish and intention to serve you, far over-pays any thing that I can do,” returned the Baronet: “ but you look very ill; let me intreat you, dearest Madam, to be careful of yourself, and now seek the cordial which you so greatly want, repose.”

SHE

SHE gave him her hand; and, after tenderly pressing it between his, he bowed to the rest of the company, and retired. The following morning, in compliance with Arabella's desire, he attended the remains of her beloved sister to the last dwelling of her ancestors; and when this sad office was performed, set out immediately for London.

BUT, notwithstanding his eager impatience to depart, his heart, his very soul, seemed to be left at Beechwood. The perfect intimacy in which he had lived with the lovely Arabella for the last four days, the tender sensibility, the noble firmness, the exalted piety, which he had observed in her, and the tender gratitude which she had manifested towards him, had endeared her to him so much, that, in leaving her, he seemed to tear himself from the better part of his existence, from all that was capable of rendering it happy.

THE separation was little less painful to her. He had been her support and consolation in the trying ~~hour of~~ extreme distress; and she wished still to behold in him the guardian spirit who was to conduct her safely along a path which experience had lately convinced her was sometimes strewn with agonizing thorns.

Mrs. Lewis, who was one of those ladies that think any place profitable to know, accepted, with eagerness, an invitation to prolong her visit; and wrote to inform her brother, that she could not feel as she did for their friends, think of leaving her friends as she had in less than a month; to be sure, content herself, as well as she could, with the usual discomforts of a bachelor's home during that time, giving

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXX.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL BE DIVERTED FROM
THE PAINFUL SENSATIONS OCCASIONED BY
THE CONTENTS OF THE LAST
BY A VERY ENTERTAINING CONVERSATION.

MISS Lewis, who was one of those ladies that think any place preferable to *home*, accepted, with eagerness, an invitation to prolong her visit; and wrote to inform her brother, that she could not, feeling as she did for their distress, think of quitting her friends at Beechwood in less than a month; so he must content himself, as well as he could, with the usual discomforts of a bachelor's house during that time; giving him,

him, however, by Mrs. Dorville's permission, an invitation to visit her as often as he pleased.

BUT this gracious allowance was not seized by him with so much avidity as she expected: he never once called till the family from Llangorwel, in due time, and high form, came to pay their visit of condolence.

LADY Anne Courteney, who could, when she pleased, put on an appearance of much softness, on this occasion behaved with all the insinuating gentleness she could assume; but the unfeeling Julia was, and appeared to be, as compleat a hoiden as ever.

THEY were accompanied by the undaunted Mrs. Harley, who still remained with them; though it was apparent, from their manner of treating her, that she was rather suffered as an encumbrance, than carested as a friend. Her manners, too, seemed, in some respects, changed with her situation. She assisted her Ladyship in taking off, and
putting

putting on her cloak ; and looped up Miss Courteney's gown with so much dexterity, that you might have concluded them offices not entirely new to her.

THE generous Arabella beheld this, her fallen state, without a triumphant sensation. She would even have pitied her, had not the remembrance of the cruel injury she had done to one so dear to her, raised an indignant flush upon her cheek, and banished compassion from her heart. It may be imagined that she received no great degree of attention from Mrs. Dorville. But Miss Marshall, willing to do all in her power to countenance the sister of her still dear Major, placed a chair near her's, and, with a look which she intended to be full of sweetness, thanked her for her last letter, and began to apologize for not having answered it.

MRS. Harley having, since the death of Maria, no further interest in keeping any terms with Miss Marshall, who she always
heartily

heartily hated, looked at her for half a minute without speaking, and then, with the cool insolence so natural to her, "Why really, Miss Marshall, I don't see any particular end that will be answered by our keeping up so useless a correspondence any longer: you cannot be more tired of it than I am."

"TIRED of it!" exclaimed Miss Marshall. "Good heavens! if I could have imagined you would have taken my neglect so very ill, I would have forfeited a night's rest, fatigued as I have been of late, sooner than have offended you!"

"LORD, you have not offended me in the least," said Mrs. Harley: "but I am sick of writing, and don't care if I never receive another letter while I live."

Miss Courteney, whose supreme delight was promoting petty mischief, having heard Miss Marshall's last words, which were pronounced with vehemence, approached, and, with an affected laugh, "Why, Harley, for
heaven's

heaven's sake what are you about? Your friend here seems quite in a fright."

"I AM, indeed, greatly hurt," said Miss Marshall, "to have seriously disoblged one whose friendship I so highly value."

"As for friendship," answered the widow, with a contemptuous smile, "it is a mighty pretty word, which has of late become so common among us, that one's most distant acquaintance take it up; but I never before apprehended that it was seriously used between you and me."

Miss Marshall was too much astonished to answer; but Julia, willing to heighten the diversion, cried, "What will Berkley say, when he hears that you two have quarrelled so dreadfully?"

"O," REPLIED Mrs. Harley, "he will be as highly diverted as he was when you told him we were become intimate."

HERE they both laughed aloud; and the governess, turning to Mrs. Harley, with a colour

colour as high as passion could raise it, "I am loth, Madam, to think you mean to insult me."

"You may think as you please," replied the widow; "It is a matter of perfect indifference, to me, I assure you. My dear Miss Courteney, you seem cold; let us walk towards the fire."

"O, no," answered Julia. "I want to make up matters between you first; for I hate squabbles; and as the Major says you will certainly be sisters at last, pray behave prettily, and love one another as relations should do."

"AND have you really heard Mr. Berkeley say any thing of that kind?" asked the credulous governess, somewhat consoled.

"I!" REPLIED Julia, "no, indeed; I was merely in joke: I don't know that ever I heard him mention your name in my life."

SAYING this with another loud laugh, they walked towards the fire, highly gratified with the extreme mortification of Miss Marshall, who left the room in the greatest hurry and trepidation, to conceal the violence of her emotions.

SOON after the ladies, attended by Mr. Lewis, took their leave. As soon as they were gone, "I protest," cried Miss Lewis, "I don't half like my brother's spending so much of his time at Llangorwel. I know Mrs. Harley has long been trying to draw him in; and I don't know what Lady Anne keeps her there for, if it is not to forward the plan."

"I THOUGHT," said Arabella, "Mr. Lewis had been an admirer of Miss Courteney's."

"WHY so he was. She could have turned him round her finger; and, notwithstanding all that I could do, he would have made proposals to her, if Sir George Brudenell had

had not slept in, and taken her whole attention to so ridiculous a degree, that even he took notice of it, and was disgusted."

"BUT jealousy," said Mrs. Dorville, "is only a proof of love, and very seldom cures it."

"NOR would it in him," cried Miss Lewis; "but she affronted, insulted him in the grossest manner: no man of his family and consequence was ever so treated. But Miss Courteney has not a grain of politeness, notwithstanding all her pretensions to fashion."

"I THINK," said Arabella, "Mrs. Harley is a much more dangerous woman. I have suffered severely by her art."

"AND I fear I shall have my turn," replied Miss Lewis. "Such a creature is a pest in a neighbourhood. Her extravagance is so unbounded, our fortune will be nothing in her hands; and it is well known that her debts, at this time, amount to more than

the little jointure poor Harley was able to settle upon her would amount to, if sold to-morrow. Poor young man, she was his ruin. He was likely to have made a pretty figure at the bar; but she would go the circuits with him, and for one guinea that he got, she spent five. She certainly broke his heart."

"You were well acquainted with him, I think," said Mrs. Dorville.

"ACQUAINTED with him! yes; I have, perhaps, some reason to accuse myself on his account: but I little thought that my refusal of him would have thrown him into such hands; but he was of a violent temper, and knew not how to bear a disappointment."

Mrs. Dorville smiled; and Miss Lewis, whose volubility was as great as her best friends could wish it, went on.

"BUT if she does marry my brother, she will find herself woefully mistaken in his fortune; for I have a paper or two in my hands,

hands, which will put me into possession of a good part of it; though I shall never put them in force while he continues single, or if he marries to please me."

No answer was given to this piece of information, and she was going to proceed, for she had a most insuperable aversion to silence, when her attention was attracted by a chaise driving up to the door. She ran to a window, and beheld a gentleman alight. "I vow it is Mr. Stanley!" cried she; rejoiced that her harangues would have another auditor. In two minutes he entered the room, and was received by his sister and niece with great kindness. A shower of tears fell from the eyes of the latter; which her uncle, although no favourer of "the melting mood," for this time forbore to check, or reprove. "This was truly kind," said Mrs. Dorville. "Your company is now as acceptable as it was unexpected."

“ O,” CRIED Mr. Stanley, “ the moment Williams’s letter reached me, I determined to lose no time in setting out. Though Bath is now as full of company as ever I knew it, and I had several engagements, of some consequence, on my hands: but I sent cards to some, and others I called upon. The only thing that gave me the least concern was, that I could not attend Lady Frances O’Harra to the rooms last night, as I had promised. Last night! no, no; it was to-night Miss O’Harra, a very fine young lady indeed, was to make her first appearance; and her mother, a sensible clever woman, and the best player at piquet I ever sat down with, wished to have as respectable and large a train of gentlemen to attend her as she could possibly collect.”

“ Your leaving them,” said Miss Lewis, “ must have been a great disappointment to her Ladyship.”

“ O, A

"O, a mere trifle," replied he, bowing: "though they were pleased to compliment me with saying otherwise. But, at all events, I was resolved to get to Beechwood as soon as possible; and I am happy to find you here Madam. Williams's letter acquainted me with your very obliging attentions to Miss Dorville. But what is become of Sir George Brudenell? I understood that he was here."

"He left us eight days ago," answered Mrs. Dorville. "Arabella has received a most polite letter from him since his departure. Do oblige your uncle, my love, with the perusal of it."

ARABELLA took it from her pocket book, and Mr. Stanley read as follows:

London, October 28.

"I WILL make no apology, dearest Madam, for the liberty I take in so early troubling you with a few lines of enquiry after your health, and state of mind, which I

am anxiously desirous to hear a favourable account of. You cannot wonder that the four days I spent with you should dwell upon my memory. Wherever I go, and however I am employed, my thoughts still return to Beechwood, still present you to my imagination. O, Madam, enable me to draw a pleasing picture. Condescend to inform me, with your own hand, that the fortitude which you possess in a degree I never saw equalled, except in one ever to be revered instance, which I have more than once mentioned to you, has enabled you to rise above the indulgence of unavailing sorrow.

“ I would say more, but fear to intrude too far at this time. Adieu, dearest Madam; believe me your most faithful and devoted

GEORGE BRUDENELL.

“ P. S. My most respectful regards attend Mrs. Dorville.”

“ Is

“Is it not a most obliging letter?” said Mrs. Dorville, when she perceived that he had done reading.

“I THINK it is something more,” said he, looking it over a second and a third time.

“Have you answered it?”

“I HAVE, Sir,” answered Arabella.

He was silent for a few minutes.—“I am sorry for it—I wish I had been here a little sooner—I must have some talk with you, when you are more able to bear it; but, at present, you need consolation more than advice. How thin and pale you look! Indeed, my dear, I am concerned to see it. One question, however, I must ask you—Who is it that Sir George alludes to when he speaks of fortitude?”

“To his mother,” answered Arabella.

“When I could have attended to nothing else, the circumstances he, with the most enthusiastic tenderness, related of her, more than once drew my mind from the contem-

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plation.

plation of its own sorrows, and fixed it in admiration of her uncommon merits."

"I HAVE heard her highly spoken of," said Mr. Stanley. She was the daughter and heiress of Lord Northcoat. I wonder, as her son possesses the estates, he does not try his interest as to the title. This is no bad time to ask for a peerage; and it would be well worth his having; for, to the best of my memory, which is pretty tenacious in these matters, it is as ancient as the reign of Edward the Fourth."

"SIR George does not appear to possess any ambition of that kind," replied Arabella.

"THEN, let me tell you," cried Mr. Stanley, warmly, "it is a very great defect in his character."

"HE is scarcely arrived at the age when ambition becomes natural," said Mrs. Dorville.

"O, you

“O, you are greatly mistaken,” cried her brother. “The sons of people of consequence are men the moment they leave school; nay, sometimes before; and a man of twenty is as perfect a judge of his own interest, and in general as steadily pursues it, as one of fifty can possibly do. I will give you an instance in point. Lord Elford, eldest son of the Earl of Burlton, within a few days after his coming of age, was so unfortunate as to lose at play, the noble estate of his mother, which had just come into his possession—Young men of fashion must risk these things, for high play is universal—Now, according to your notions, there was nothing to be expected from such a youth, but penitential letters to his father, and a mean dependance upon what he was pleased to allow him, or the application of a pistol, in a fit of desperation; but, instead of either, Lord Elford extricated himself, most completely, by marrying the widow of a distiller,

who had persuaded an old doating husband to leave her his whole fortune, amounting to more than seventy thousand pounds, with which he redeemed his estate. The whole affair was compleated within three weeks after his loss, and before the Earl had given credit to the report of it—And now tell me, could a man of forty have acted more wifely?”

“It was an action,” replied Arabella, “that I should have judged most unnatural for a youth of twenty one. But, before I can in any degree approve it, I must be informed whether the rich widow makes an amiable wife: I fear not, from the hint you gave respecting the manner in which she got her fortune.”

“Why, as to that,” answered Mr. Stanley, “I believe there is not much to be said. Though a young woman with respect to her late, she is a good many years older than her present husband, and a great deal too fat to
be

be handsome. Nor was her education suited to her present rank in life: but my Lord is very little with her; so these matters do not affect him much."

"BUT you cannot mention this," said Mrs. Dorville, "as a desirable match; or Lord Elford as an example to other young men!"

"IN a man of lower rank," returned Mr. Stanley, "it would have been very dishonourable. But this is one of the inestimable privileges of nobility; they can exalt those with whom they connect themselves to their own standard. The distiller's widow must now sit down in the same place, and be treated with the same respect, as if she had been the daughter of a peer. I confess I should not *wish* a young man to be reduced to the necessity of acting as Lord Elford did; but he certainly got over his difficulties in a manner that did infinite credit to his spirit and understanding."

"THAT

"THAT cannot be denied," cried Miss Lewis, impatient of so long a silence.

"I THINK," said Arabella, "it would have done much more honour to both, if he had, by declining play, avoided such a necessity."

"O, you know nothing of the world, my dear. How can you keep in the best company, without doing as they do? Even I, who do not pretend to be in so very high a line, sacrifice some hundreds every year at the card table."

"WELL," cried Arabella, "I could never think myself justified in so doing, even if my inclinations led me to it, let my fortune be as large as it would."

"NAY," said Miss Lewis, "you surely go too far there. It would be hard, indeed, if one had not a right to dispose of one's income in any way that pleased oneself, without prejudicing any other person. Is not money given us to make us happy and respectable?"

"Most

"Most certainly," replied Arabella. "But different dispositions pursue the same end by various means. I think a large fortune was never bestowed upon any person for his sole use; I look upon it as a trust, which must be strictly accounted for."

"Why then," said Miss Lewis, "all property might as well be in common, if every poor person one sees has a right to demand a share."

"I think," said Arabella, "every person, who has not such necessities, and even comforts, of life, as his situation in it requires, and can prove that it is not absolutely his own fault, has a natural claim upon his rich neighbour, to reduce his own luxuries, and supply them."

"This is talking at random," returned Mr. Stanley. "We all contribute largely to the support of the poor; and if they were honest and industrious, none of them need want. When you have lived a little in the world,

world, these very strict notions, which I fear tend towards Methodism, will, I hope, wear off."

MRS. Dorville smiled at her brother's sagacity, and said, "I believe there is little danger that my daughter's faith should ever persuade her of the inutility of good works; and if she will not carry matters to an extreme, I would not wish her to alter her opinions. Her father used to argue just as she does; and when she was a mere infant, he taught her to bestow half of her little income on the poor."

"Oh," cried Arabella, tears filling her eyes, "he was a perfect pattern of all goodness! He had the best, the most humane of all hearts!"

"Come, come, Miss Dorville," said her uncle, "do not compliment those who are gone, at the expence of your living friends. You are not of an age, or sex, to set up for a reformer."

"VERY

“VERY true, Sir,” said Miss Lewis. “Let us start a pleasanter subject; I protest I am half asleep. Who is the reigning toast at Bath this season?”

THE mind of Arabella could not bear so sudden a transition; and she retired to her own apartment, to indulge herself in the contemplation of that dear parent, whose remembrance her recent loss had brought with fresh vigour to her recollection, and to reflect, with the warmest gratitude, on the pains he had taken to open her young mind to the distresses of her fellow creatures, and reject the selfish policy of living for herself alone; a policy which can never answer the mean end for which it is designed. Happiness is not to be had exclusively; it delights, it exists only in communication; and the sordid wretch who has no wish but to secure it to his worthless self, deserves the bitter disappointment which certainly awaits him.

CHAPTER XXXI.

INSTANCES OF THE BENEVOLENCE OF SIR GEORGE
AND ARABELLA :

ANOTHER ELOPEMENT TO GRETNAGREEN;
WITH OTHER INTERESTING AND ENTERTAINING
PARTICULARS.

MR. Stanley and Miss Lewis agreed exactly in their sentiments concerning the effects of retirement; they declared that it injured the health, lowered the spirits, and divested life of all enjoyment. Beechwood was, therefore, as far as their influence extended, rendered a scene of gaiety and pleasure; all the neighbouring families resorted thither by their invitation; for Mrs. Dorville gave them full liberty to ask whom they

they pleased, as her state of health was at all times a reason for her withdrawing from company when it became unpleasant to her; and she thought the exertion, which a number of visitors rendered unavoidable to her daughter, would have a good effect, in forcing her attention from the sad object which had still full possession of it.

PERHAPS she was right in this particular; but the medicine was a very nauseous one to Arabella; it fatigued and disgusted her. She wished her disorder to have been gradually cured by the lenient hand of time, which, though his operations are slow, yet, assisted by her fortitude and piety, would have been as certain, and much less painful. She longed for the expiration of the month which Miss Lewis, in the excess of her friendship, and compassion, had promised to stay with them; and thought quiet, and the absolute disposal of her time, all that was necessary to restore her peace.

BUT

BUT though her attention was much called off from her usual and favourite pursuits, nothing could induce her to neglect the duties which her benevolent heart was continually prompting her to perform. She had not been many days returned home, before she wrote to Mrs. Williams, the owner of the humble cottage where the forlorn Maria first took refuge after her flight from Berkley, to enquire into the particulars of her circumstances, and in what way she could most effectually benefit her; telling her, she looked upon it as her duty to settle her advantageously in the world, in return for the timely relief, and humane treatment, her late dear sister had experienced at her hands. This letter, into which she put a ten pound note, she enclosed in one to a person in Abergavenny, directing it to be forwarded by a purpose messenger. It was several days before it reached Mrs. Williams, who was moved, together with her family, to a distant habitation.

tation. At length, however, she received it; and Arabella had the following answer from her.

“Honoured lady,

“I HAVE just received and read the letter wherewith you were pleased to favour me; and for it, and its generous contents, I offer you my humblest thanks. But, blessed be heaven and my noble benefactor for it, neither I or mine are now in want, or like to be, if it is not our own fault, which, I hope and trust, it never will be.

“ABOUT a fortnight since, a very fine young gentleman, who, I have now reason to know is my noble landlord, Sir George Brudenell, stopped at my poor hut. Neither I, or my brother, who happened to be then with me, could guess what he wanted; but he soon told us. O, Madam, he came like an angel from heaven to cure all our misfortunes. He told us that he had heard of our
ill

ill luck in the world, of the sad end of my poor dear William, and, he was pleased to say, of our honesty, and was come to offer us a little farm of his near Monmouth, which was then vacant, and might be had at an easy rent. I cannot help weeping now, Madam, to think how very good he was. When we said we had no money to stock it, he said that should make no difference; for he would write to his steward there to let us have what we wanted. After all this, he gave us money to move the children, and our few goods; and we have now been here above a week, and begin to get things about us, as I used to have. O, Madam, I and my children are bound to pray for him as long as we live. I find it was your dear sister, now in heaven, that told him of us; and he was coming from her funeral when he made us all so happy. So it is to that sweet lady that we owe all at first. O, Madam, our landlord deserves to be a prince; all his tenants
bless

blefs and pray for him; but I, more than all, will ever continue to pray for him and you.

“ I HOPE you will pardon me for troubling you fo long: indeed, I could not help telling you all that he has done for us. I will preſume once more to thank you for your kind offers, and remain your Ladyſhip’s moſt dutiful ſervant till death,

SARAH WILLIAMS.”

ARABELLA was delighted with the contents of this letter: but they did not make her happier; on the contrary, every additional inſtance of Sir George’s merit, while it ſerved to endear him to her, and prove his ſoul the counterpart of her own, made her more deeply regret that ſhe had been unable to gain his heart. In answer to her letter, ſhe had received one, expreſſive, indeed, of the tendereſt and moſt friendly reſpect, but putting an end to all further correſpondence be-

tween them, as no reply was asked for, even by the most distant hint. He mentioned too, a design of going abroad for a couple of years, which, if the remotest hope had remained in her bosom, must have extinguished it. This cruel disappointment was no small addition to the grief which was occasioned by her late affecting loss; and it required all the resolution and fortitude of which she was possessed, to enable her to bear up under their united weight with a tolerable degree of firmness.

At the conclusion of the proposed month, Arabella expected her visitor to have departed; but Miss Lewis had a scheme in hand which would not admit of such a removal: she was actually laying snares for the heart of the Antiquarian, and, to all appearance, with some prospect of success; he showing a high deference for her opinions on all occasions, which was not, indeed, very surprising, as she was careful to make them always

ways coincide with his own. Mrs. Dorville and her daughter perceived her intention, but attempted not to interfere in her operations, being perfectly indifferent as to their success.

It was, however, to the great and unre-mitted attention paid him by this fair lady, that they attributed his lengthened stay at Beechwood, from whence he did not talk of going; though winter made hasty approaches, and all people of fashion, of course, turn their faces towards the metropolis. Indeed, he was particularly vulnerable on the side of flattery; and such kind of incense from one of the softer sex, was equally novel, and agreeable to him; for his fortune, as I have before mentioned, being only a life income, he was disregarded by those ladies who seek a settlement; and, considering his person and manners, he could have little chance of particular regards from any other description of polite females. But Miss Lewis was so

very moderate in her wishes, or rather expectations, that even *he* was regarded as a desirable conquest. She had, though but within a few months past, secured to herself a handsome income from her brother's estate, and now only sought to have her "reproach taken away from among men," which the name of Stanley would do as effectually as if its possessor had been the most amiable and engaging of men.

SHE had not, however, been able to bring him to an actual declaration, (old bachelors being always shy in that business, and shuffling a thousand ways, before they come to the point,) when all her schemes were deranged in a most unpleasant manner.

SHE was returning from a morning walk in the Park, *tête-à-tête* with her soft enamourata, on whose arm she was leaning. He had been describing, in the most scientific style, some rare shells, and other natural curiosities, which he had brought from abroad; while she,

she, apparently all attention, and infinitely interested in the account, was considering in what square her London house should be situated, and of what number of servants her income, united to that of Mr. Stanley, would allow their establishment to consist, when she beheld a person, who, she presently knew, to be the housekeeper from Aberhonvy, approaching towards them. "I suppose," said she, "my brother is at length out of all patience at my long absence, for his prime minister is coming in haste towards us, and I have no doubt but she brings me letters of recall."

"HEAVEN forbid!" cried Mr. Stanley; who had seen, in many instances, that gallantry was not yet entirely out of fashion; "Heaven forbid that it should be so! If I had a prison with seven towers, I should certainly imitate the Grand Seignor, and detain you in it; for seeking to deprive me of you, is no less than declaring open war against me."

"PERHAPS," returned she, "there may be no occasion for proceeding to such extremities; a brother's claim is not so strong but it may be superceded. Well, Jenkins, you seem in a great hurry; but stop, and breathe a little, before you tell me your message; for I suppose your master has not written.

"O, LORD, Madam," answered the good woman, "strange doings at the Hall! I protest I am afraid to tell you."

"WHAT do you mean?" said Miss Lewis, loosing Mr. Stanley's arm in apparent alarm, "tell me this moment!"

"GOOD Madam, don't be in a passion, but my master—"

"WHAT of your master—speak out—he's not married?"

"VERY near it, I am afraid, Madam, by this time."

"THEN may poverty and wretchedness be his portion—Weak, silly idiot, as he is—

But

But how was it? — When did they go? — Speak this instant!”

“WHY, Ma’am,” said poor Jenkins, trembling all over, “he went to Llangorwel yesterday morning early; and I thought it was something very particular when he set out, for he was merrier than ever I saw him; and just as he was going away, he said, “you’ll hear something of me that you don’t expect to-morrow; but it shall be none the worse for you, if you behave well;” and then he looked at Mr. Thomas, who, to be sure, was in the secret, and they both laughed.”

“PROVOKING wretch!” cried Miss Lewis, in a rage, “why did not you come and tell me this instantly? — I can hardly keep my hands off you.”

“BE calm, dear Madam,” said Mr. Stanley, half frightened at her violence; “it ill becomes a lady—”

“DON’T talk to me of what is becoming.— My brother has ruined himself, and will be in jail for his wife’s debts before a week is out.—O, thou bewitched creature!” turning to Jenkins, “if I had but known in time, I could have saved all; for he never could refuse me any thing when I was with him; though the fool forgets every thing I say to him the moment he is out of my sight. And so when all the mischief was done, you came to tell me with your crocodile tears. You always think a good fit of crying will make up matters with me.”

“WHAT, is your lady frequently subject to these passions?” said Mr. Stanley, in a low voice.

“MY mistress is a good lady,” replied Jenkins, “and never is hard upon a poor servant, but she makes her amends for it afterwards.”

“PRAY, Sir,” said Miss Lewis, who was entirely off her guard, “no impertinent

nent questions; I am not in a humour to be insulted."

SHE then walked hastily towards the house, scolding poor Jenkins all the way most unmercifully, for not preventing the ruin of her brother, which she positively averred she might have done.

As she entered the parlour where the family were sitting, "Stand at the door, wretch," said she to the housekeeper. "I have many questions to ask thee when I can recollect them."

BEFORE she was seated, she again began, "Would you believe it, ladies, my idiot brother is married this morning to Mrs. Harley!"

"No, Madam," cried Jenkins, "not to Mrs. Harley; he is gone off to Scotland with Miss Courteney."

"Miss Courteney!" replied her mistress; "sure you dream!"

"No, indeed, Ma'am. A servant from Llangorwel came this blessed day to tell of it. Mrs. Harley is there now."

"WHY this makes some difference," cried Miss Lewis; "though bad enough, it is not half so shocking as the other. If Miss Courteney has no fortune, she is, at least, clear in the world, and is, in some respects, a preferable woman."

"I HOPE we shall soon see you quite reconciled to the marriage," said Arabella; "but I assure you I was almost alarmed at your agitation when you came in."

"You might well be surprized, indeed," answered Miss Lewis. "I ought to make you all a thousand apologies, Go, Jenkins; I will speak to you presently. I am really quite ashamed of having been so discomposed," colouring high, and looking at Mr. Stanley. "I can't think how it happened; for nobody can be less passionate than myself."

self. Indeed, I am afraid I behaved very ill."

"O, NOT at all," answered Mr. Stanley, coolly.

"Now I know I have said something that you take amiss," said she eagerly: "do tell me what it is; for I am sure you are the last person in the world I would willingly offend."

"You have said nothing to offend me; I assure you, Madam. I was only sorry to see you so heated; but, as matters are not as you imagined, I hope your uneasiness is over."

"WHY, not absolutely. The present match should not have taken place if I could have prevented it; but, in comparison with what I feared, it appears tolerable."

"I ALWAYS thought your brother partial to Miss Courteney," said Mrs. Dorville.

“ O, YES,” replied Miss Lewis.” He would have married her, child as she is, long ago, but for my opposition; and, as I told you, before the intervention of Sir George Brudenell, who she was most ridiculously fond of. How Lewis could forget her treatment of him then I cannot imagine; but I believe there is a destiny in marriage, and she was to be his lot. I suppose the Courtenays are highly pleased to have got her off so well, without giving her a shilling; though I have no doubt but Lady Anne will draw herself up, and say, her daughter might have done better.”

ARABELLA tried to reconcile Miss Lewis to her new sister; but she persisted to declare that there should be submissions, and those not small ones, from him and his faucy wife, before she would take them into favour; and she supposed, as his estates were settled upon her, if he had no children, they would both
be

be ready enough to court her to join in making Madam a jointure.

SHE expressed herself in so peremptory and unfeeling a manner on this subject, that Arabella could not pity her distress, on finding Mr. Stanley's short lived partiality entirely vanished. The spark of affection which her flattery had, with difficulty, kindled, her unguarded folly had compleatly extinguished; and all that she could do was insufficient again to light it.

THE violent passion which he had witnessed, and the plain hint from Mrs. Jenkins, that such matters were not uncommon, had opened the eyes of this wary lover, whose liking had never arisen to so great a height, as to determine him to close them at all events, against the perception of her faults. He never had much of the warm and romantic in his disposition. Indeed, there are few juster observations than that "the heart is cold where vanity resides. Vanity was

ever his ruling passion; and as this "mean self love" had prevented him, in the younger part of his life, from forming any connection, which might now have rendered him more happy and respectable, fortune, to make him some amends, contrived that it should now be the means of saving him from one which would certainly have rendered him miserable. When he reflected on all that he had seen and heard that morning, he thought he could never sufficiently felicitate himself on his escape; and determined from that instant, to give up all thoughts of matrimony; fearing no rich dowager would fall to his lot; and concluding, upon the whole, that nothing less would compensate for giving up a life of "single blessedness."

I wish I could inform my readers that Miss Lewis found it as easy to reconcile herself to her disappointment; but, alas! it was far otherwise. Now, that she thought
herself

herself so near the attainment of what had been her principal object for the last five and twenty years, to see the honourable cup of matrimony, when she had even laid her hand upon it, when it seemed almost to touch her lips, at such a moment, to see it suddenly dashed from her, and by herself too, was past all endurance.

For a few days she endeavoured to use her old weapons, compliment and compliance, hoping, by degrees, to soften him, and recover her former station in his heart; but finding her efforts vain, and her quondam admirer quite impenetrable, she gave up the point: but, as the ill-humour of some people never falls harmless to the ground, she determined her brother and sister should suffer for the injury they had involuntarily done her, and grew impatient for their return, that she might make somebody as uneasy as herself.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXII.

VERY SHORT, AND NOT OVER INTERESTING,
BUT NECESSARY TO THE CONTINUATION OF
OUR IMPORTANT HISTORY.

ARABELLA had waved all the rejoicings which were intended to celebrate her coming of age, postponing them till she was more able to partake in the festivity, which, as yet, she found it impossible to do. She also put off, till the ensuing spring, her intended journey into Dorsetshire, where the largest part of her property lay. By the death of her sister, her fortune was doubled; and, besides a considerable sum of money, she was in possession of two thousand pounds a year;

a year; to which twelve hundred more would be added at the death of her mother. Mr. Stanley, impatient to have the credit of producing so beautiful and rich an heiress to the world, was continually pressing her to go to London, where all the fashionable people were now assembled. He could not imagine what could be her motive for burying herself alive in Wales, when every thing that was desirable seemed to invite her removal. He even mentioned the probability of the Duke of Dunbeath's being there, as an inducement; and hoped, if he still retained his partiality for her, she would not obstinately persevere in rejecting an alliance which would render her the envy and admiration of the metropolis. She assured him, that her sentiments, with regard to his Grace, were the same as they had ever been; and forbade him ever to expect an alteration in them. It was with difficulty that he kept his temper within tolerable bounds

on

on this mortifying occasion; and he told her, he was convinced there must be a ridiculous prepossession in her mind in favour of some other man; and he had little doubt but it was Sir George Brudenell who made her thus blind to her own interest and the honour of her family.

SHE could not deny this home charge; nor, circumstanced as she was, did she think proper to own it; she therefore remained silent; and her uncle proceeded to represent to her the folly of forming an attachment while she was utterly unfit to chuse for herself; for how was it possible for one who had seen so very little, to form a just estimate of mankind, or guess what would, or would not, make her happy?

INDEED, he was certain that she would hereafter repent of any choice she should at present make; for her notions were childish and romantic, such as never entered into the heads of people of condition. He besought her

her to reflect upon the many advantages she possessed, and not weakly throw them away: fewer attractions, smaller possessions than hers, would any day secure a simple baronet; and if she married so unadvisedly, she might depend upon it a day would come, when her mature understanding would teach her to rue her own folly whenever a ducal coronet came in sight, and heartily repent that she had not rather been guided by his experience, than her own wayward fancy.

THUS powerfully would Mr. Stanley reason and argue, but, alas! to little purpose. His niece, though she listened with an obliging attention, appeared not in the least convinced that he was right, and steadily persisted in her resolution of spending the winter at Beechwood; from whence, indeed, she determined not to go till the six months of her mourning were over. Not that she looked upon this as a necessary respect to the memory of her sister, or a propriety of conduct

duct which she owed to her own character; she had "that within" which rendered such considerations useless. The "stricken deer" will weep, will betray the anguish of his heart, regardless of notice and observation; but they who wish to personate a sorrow they do not feel, must keep a watchful eye over the minutest part of their conduct, that it may appear consistent to that world whose applause they seek.

HAD Arabella's spirits been perfectly recovered, had she been quite at ease, she would have had many objections to going to London solely under the guidance and protection of her uncle, whose manner of living there, and general line of company, she greatly disliked; but there was yet another reason, more powerful than all the rest; Sir George Brudenell was there; and she had already suffered too much from that most amiable disturber of her repose, to suffer her to risk the danger of still stronger fascination.

nation. She felt the delicious pleasure which his society would afford her; she remembered how his tender attentions had soothed her distress; but to indulge herself with a repetition of them, would have been pouring oil upon a fire which already glowed too ardently for her peace.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONTAINS A VERY CURIOUS EPISTLE FROM A
WHIMSICAL MARRIED LADY
TO A VERY SINGULAR UNMARRIED ONE,
WITH SOME ENTERTAINING CONVERSATION IN
CONSEQUENCE THEREOF.

SEVERAL weeks elapsed before the return of Mr. Lewis and his new married lady; nor had either of them condescended to write a line to Llangorwel or Aberhonvy. At length, however, a messenger arrived from the latter place, with intelligence that they were come, and a letter for Miss Lewis, containing the following words:

“ Dear

“ Dear Madam,

“ LORD! I beg your pardon; I ought to have begun with dear sister; but it is so new a title, when applied to you, that I hardly know how to reconcile myself to it. I suppose you wonder where, in the name of heaven, we have been all this while; and so, I dare say, does Lady Anne and my father, who probably expected a fine supplicatory letter from me a few days after I left them, to say, ‘ pray forgive me for pleasing myself,’ and all that: but, you know, I always loved to do things out of the common way, and so I persuaded Lewis to take me for a month to Edinburgh, (which, by the way, is a frightful place, nothing like equal to London,) on purpose to make my Glamorganshire friends stare, and wonder where we were.

“ BUT, as all pleasant things are soon over, our excursion is come to an end, (it would have lasted longer, if the cash had held

held out,) and we are once again arrived among the horrid Welsh mountains, which I detest from my very soul, and, what is more, at Aberhonvy, the most frightful old house in the principality.

“YOUR brother longs to have you at home again, and says the house is all at *fixes and sevens* for want of you. Poor soul, if he had not forgot to write any thing but his own name, (which I saw him do at Gretna-Green, or I would never have believed it,) he would himself have written to tell you so. But I, his good genius, undertook the task; so pray let us see you to-day. I must not say a word to the Dorvilles till they have sent their congratulations; but I hope they will be expeditious, for I long to have the world about me. How you could live in this melancholy place, with no companion but Lewis, I cannot conceive; but you old maids can bear any thing, contented, good creatures,

as

as you are; it would kill me, I am certain, in three months.

“ I HAVE written to my mother, who, I suppose, will be on the *high ropes* with me for a little while; but I never minded her much, and shall not begin now; only I wish she would let me have Victoria here for a little while, to help to amuse me, for I am horribly vapoured.—Indeed, you may guess that I want something to do, or I should not have written such an enormous letter.

“ I WILL, however, put an end to it, and remain your's till I see you,

JULIA LEWIS.

“ WHAT a frightful Welsh name!

“ THE chaise accompanies this; pray come immediately.”

MISS Lewis sat swelling with indignation for some minutes after she had read this curious epistle; and then giving it to Arabella,

“ Read this,” said she, “ and tell me if ever you saw a piece of effrontery equal to it!”

“ WELL, Madam,” when she had finished, “ does not Mrs. Lewis, if possible, outdo Miss Courteney? If ever I enter their house—”

“ HUSH, hush,” cried Arabella; “ make no hasty resolutions. This letter is no more than might be expected from the thoughtless character of the writer: did you expect an alteration to have taken place already?”

“ No, no,” answered Miss Lewis. “ I never expect any thing but insult from one of that family: but she shall not find me the contented, good creature, she is pleased to call me: she shall not find that I can bear any thing.”

“ You are too warm about these trifles,” said Arabella. By resenting her giddy expressions,

pressions, you show her where you are vulnerable, and teach her how to wound you."

" WOULD you then advise me to bear all this tamely, and hasten to attend her pleasure?"

" BY no means. Write her a civil note, and tell her you expect a more serious invitation. But take no notice of her absurd fallies, they deserve total neglect."

" IMPOSSIBLE!" cried Miss Lewis. " My spirit is not so meek as to suffer any one to insult me with impunity—O, she shall repent this—Little spiteful creature!"

" WELL, if you are determined as to your mode of proceeding," said Arabella, " I will say no more; but if, for the sake of your brother, you would wish to reclaim rather than irritate—"

" O, IT would be a vain attempt. If I was to stoop before her, I know she would, with pleasure, trample me under her feet—But, thank heaven, the power is in my hands, and she shall feel it."

“ Do let me moderate matters between you,” said Arabella, who certainly deserved the blessing which is promised to the “ peace makers.” “ The carriage going empty home will be a sufficient mortification to her, and your brother, who, you hear, is impatient for your return.”

“ O, YES,” interrupted Miss Lewis; “ he knows it is his interest to get me back, if he can. To you, Miss Dorville, I will trust the knowledge of our real situation; though I would not, for the world, mention it to any other person. I was left, by an unjust and partial father, with a very small fortune; too small for a gentlewoman to live upon with any tolerable credit; of course it was soon spent; for I have a generous spirit, and cannot bear to be out done by others in my rank of life. I also contracted some debts, which, when Humphrey came of age, he discharged; and promised, if I would

would live with him, to allow me an hundred pounds a year."

" THIS was a poor pittance; but his late guardian named the sum, and I was obliged to seem satisfied; and upon it I have contrived to live ever since, except his now and then paying a bill for me. But I could not feel comfortable in so dependent a situation; and with coaxing and threatening to leave him, I got him, just after his quarrel with Miss Courteney, when the poor soul was determined never to marry, to settle two hundred pounds a year upon me while I live in his house, and four hundred if he married, and I chose to leave it. This is the circumstance which brings me so early an invitation to Aberhonvy. Though our estates are called two thousand pounds a year, they do not bring in more than a clear twelve hundred; and if four are deducted from that, poor Mrs. Lewis will find few of the luxuries of life come within her reach."

“BUT surely,” said Arabella, “you would not make your brother repent of his generosity.”

“O, he has done that long ago, I assure you,” cried Miss Lewis. “Generosity! indeed; he has not a grain of it: though I have, to be sure, had a good deal of money from him at different times; but I do not thank him for a guinea of it, for I was obliged to try a thousand different ways to get it out of him. He is naturally covetous to an excess, and, I know, will make his wife bend as low as I please, rather than pay me the additional two hundred pounds—Have not I a delightful hold upon them?”

“I TRUST you mean to make a generous use of your power,” said Arabella, “and by that means render it a blessing to all. The influence it will give you over your sister, may, in the end, be a great advantage to to herself.”

“IN

"In your hands perhaps it might," replied Miss Lewis. "You are always contriving the good of others, and think of yourself last: but that is not my way: I am determined to assert my own consequence, and humble her proud spirit. I vow I am almost glad that he married the little insolent to give me an opportunity; for there are few things pleasanter than taking down such conceited young flirts."

ARABELLA was displeased, and remained silent. "Nay," cried Miss Lewis, "do not look grave; I believe I am as good as my neighbours, though I talk a little at random: don't be angry with me; warm tempers, like mine, are never malicious. I did not know that Mrs. Lewis was a favourite of your's."

"I AM not particularly partial to her," replied Arabella; "she has too strong a propensity to teasing to be very agreeable to me."

"AN excellent reproof," cried Miss Lewis, "and I thank you for it: perhaps time may mend me; but, you know, sudden alterations are not to be expected. I am determined, however, how to act on this occasion; the carriage shall go back with no other message than that I am glad to hear they are well."

ARABELLA contested the point no further, and the chaise and servants were immediately dismissed.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING OF SEVERAL OF THE
PRINCIPAL PERSONS IN OUR HISTORY
AT LLANGORWEL,
WITH WHAT PASSED UPON THE OCCASION.

THE following morning Mr. Stanley declared it his opinion that etiquette demanded their paying a visit at Llangorwel, to congratulate the family there on the return of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis. Mrs. Dorville thought the weather too damp to permit her to go out with safety, and was of opinion that the visit might, with more propriety, be deferred till a reconciliation had taken place. But Miss Lewis closed eagerly with Mr. Stanley's proposal, saying, she

I 4 longed

longed to know how Lady Anne meant to receive her daughter. Arabella, who never made any difficulty of compliance in matters of no real moment, ordered the coach, and accompanied them with great readiness. They were received by Miss Victoria, who, though a mere child, endeavoured to assume all the airs and consequence of her sister, whose manners she exactly imitated, though, unfortunately, her person was much plainer.

“ My dear Miss Dorville,” cried she, as they entered the breakfast parlour, “ how good you are to make us so early a visit?” (It was but little after twelve.) “ Miss Lewis, Mr. Stanley, I am happy to see you. How is it possible that you can have come quite from Beechwood already? I protest I have not been up a quarter of an hour, and my eyes are scarce open yet.”

“ We never breakfast later than ten,” said Arabella; “ and I am always up at least
two

two hours before that time, even at this time of the year."

"WELL," returned Victoria, "I should be sick to death of so much day light; for in the winter there is certainly nothing so gloomy and disagreeable; one is never half alive till the candles are lighted."

"I AGREE with you in a great degree," cried Miss Lewis: "the light of the sun was rather intended for business than pleasure."

"O, AS for business," answered Miss Courteney, carelessly, "I scarce conceive the meaning of the word."

ARABELLA could not repress a smile. "Will it be long, my dear, before Lady Anne is up?"

"O, NO; Jackson went to her as soon as you came in, and she will huddle on her cloaths in a moment, now she knows you are here. We had an unexpected guest last night,

which made us later than usual—that diverting creature Major Berkley.”

“ MAJOR Berkley!” said Arabella, starting, and the colour instantly forsaking her cheeks, “ is he here?”

“ DON’T be alarmed,” cried Miss Lewis; “ you need not see him, except you chuse it.”

“ O, you need not be afraid; he is out a hunting with my father, and I dare say will not be at home these three hours.”

“ PRAY, Miss Dorville,” said Mr. Stanley, “ do not let such trifles discompose you; assert your own dignity, and let him avoid your presence; surely he has most reason to dread the interview. I beg you will not decline it; do not give him so much consequence at your expence.”

“ It would be very painful to me to see him,” replied Arabella. “ I cannot answer for my conduct on such an occasion.”

“ Well,”

"WELL," cried Victoria, "he is the last man in the world that I would try to avoid: I wish to heaven he was to be here all the winter, for he makes every body alive. He says he is sure I shall be taller than Julia, and that all the men think her complexion much too fair. But I beg your pardon," turning to Arabella; "I forgot, at that moment, that your's is still more so; it was very rude to repeat his remark to you."

"O, PRAY proceed," replied Arabella, smiling; "I am not at all desirous of Mr. Berkley's compliments."

"NAY," cried Miss Courteney, "he told me that he never payed any; and I really believe he says exactly what he thinks."

THE entrance of Lady Anne and Mrs. Harley, for the present, put a stop to the loquacity of Miss Victoria; and, after a short general conversation, Mr. Stanley began his speech of congratulation, every word of

which he had considered, and put into proper form, before he left Beechwood.

LADY Anne made a polite return to his civility; and then informing Miss Lewis that she had the day before received a whimsical note from her daughter, enquired whether she had heard from her. Before Miss Lewis could reply, which she was eagerly about to, the door opened, and Mrs. Lewis herself appeared.

AMAZEMENT sat on every countenance; and all were silent, till the flippancy Julia, advancing towards her mother, cried, "Dear Lady Anne, you look all astonishment: sure matrimony must have made a strange alteration in me, for you hardly seem to recollect who I am."

SHE attempted to take her mother's hand, which was hastily withdrawn.

"I KNOW not yet whether I shall ever recollect that I have been connected with *Mrs. Lewis*," said Lady Anne, haughtily.

ARABELLA

ARABELLA arose to depart. "Dear Miss Dorville, Mr. Stanley, I intreat you not to leave us: I expected not this bold intrusion; pray stay with me."

"WELL, this is the most unaccountable thing in the world," said Mrs. Lewis, "I thought myself remarkably humble and condescending, after the saucy note I had from Victoria yesterday. I'll be judged by Miss Dorville if I could possibly do more than I have done."

"Miss Dorville is so unlike you," replied Lady Anne, "that it is impossible for her to judge of your absurd actions."

"VERY well," cried Mrs. Lewis, seating herself by her mother, "I suppose I shall be expected to beg pardon upon my knees; but to do that handsomely Lewis should be with me, and then we should look exactly like the figures on old Sir Thomas's monument."

"AND"

“AND pray where is he?” said Lady Anne.

“O, HE is gone, like a dutiful brother, to Beechwood, to beg forgiveness of his sister; but I see the poor soul will lose his labour, as, indeed, he generally does.”

“PERHAPS it would have been well for him,” cried Miss Lewis, colouring high, “if he had done so when he made an absurd request to you.”

“WHY, so I have often told him,” replied this affectionate wife. “You, Harley, have heard me give him much good advice. I think, upon the whole, he would have done better, if he had taken you; and matters were drawing towards a conclusion between you, I believe, when I took it into my head to take a Scotch journey. He tells me every thing, but the day, was fixed; and that you had left to him. Now confess; was it really so?”

MRS.

“ MRS. Harley’s eyes shot fire; but she checked her indignation, and only answered, “ I never wished to be a rival to Miss Courteney.”

“ WELL, that is more than I can say with respect to you; for one great inducement with me to take Lewis, was to disappoint you. I saw you were so seriously set upon having him, that I could not resist the temptation. But do excuse me, dear Harley; for I dare say I shall heartily repent it.”

“ COME, my dear Madam,” turning to Lady Anne, “ I see you long to smile; do indulge the inclination, and give me the pleasure of seeing you look like yourself.”

“ TELL me, Miss Dorville,” said her Ladyship, “ what shall I do with this strange creature?”

“ O, RECEIVE her into favour, by all means,” replied Arabella, smiling, on condition that she drops the levity of the spinster, and supports, with proper dignity, the character

rafter of matron, which she has now assumed."

"O, FOR heaven's sake, no such frightful conditions," cried Mrs. Lewis: "I am determined to be ten thousand times more giddy than ever I was. Did not I marry to gain liberty and independence?"

"My brother has a fine prospect, truly," said Miss Lewis.

"O, AS to that," answered her sister, "you and he may go on just as you used to do; I will never interfere in the household management, I assure you; I detest all such drudgery; and if he will but provide me current cash for Weymouth and Brighthelmstone in the summer, and only two or three months of dear London in the winter, it is all that I shall ever expect or desire from him."

"If these are your expectations," cried Miss Lewis, in great agitation, "I rejoice in the certainty of their disappointment.

The

The demands which I have upon my brother will take a large part of his current cash; for I shall not be such an easy, good-humoured creature, as to rest contented with less than all my right."

"I WISH I had known the extent of your demands two months ago; but Lewis must settle that with you. Two journies in a year I must, and will have; for I would as soon be buried alive, as spend my whole time at Aberhonvy, which is, without dispute, the most gloomy, melancholy place in this savage country."

"I SHOULD rejoice," cried Mr. Stanley, "if I could infuse a small part of your spirit into Miss Dorville. I have been pressing and intreating her to go to London for these two months past, and cannot yet prevail."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Julia, "how strange that is! I never knew any body, but you, that was fond of Wales in the winter;
but

but I suppose you do not like to go to town till you are Lady Brudenell. Pray when is the marriage to take place? do you expect Sir George soon at Beechwood?"

"I HAVE no expectation of his coming at present," said Arabella, a beautiful glow rising on her cheeks.

"WELL," cried Mrs. Lewis, "whenever he does come, I shall certainly envy you; for he's a bewitching man: I really believe I should be tempted to break the match if I could; though, the more is my misfortune, I cannot have him myself."

"O, JULIA," said Miss Courteney, "I wish you would let me have the charming horse he gave you: I have rode upon him very often while you were away, and like him of all things: he puts me in mind of his master, who is, to be sure, the handsomest man I ever saw."

"LORD, child," replied Mrs. Lewis, "do you begin to talk of handsome men? I would

would not part with the horse for a thousand guineas. It is well that you put me in mind of sending for him, which I will certainly do to-morrow morning; he will be by far the prettiest thing about Aberhonvy. But I think I hear my father's voice in the hall; methinks I want to shake hands with him."

ARABELLA arose, with visible emotion, and would have taken her leave; but her uncle urged the impropriety of it with some warmth; and before the debate was ended, Mr. Courteney and the Major entered the room.

MR. Berkley started, and seemed a little confused, when he first saw her; nor was Mr. Courteney less surprized to behold his daughter; but both soon recovered their presence of mind; and Mrs. Lewis running to her father, he very cordially embraced her; saying, "I am glad to see you here again, my dear girl; my anger against you did not last, in the whole, above ten minutes.

I married

I married against all consent myself, and how could I blame you for doing the same?"

"WELL, my dear Sir," cried she, "I shall love you for this as long as I live. If Lady Anne had received me with as good a grace, what a vast deal of squabbling had been saved. But you had always infinitely more good-nature than she. Major Berkley! why this is an unexpected happiness. From whence, and when came you?"

MR. Courteney had addressed Arabella in his usual easy manner; but the Major's respectful bow had met with so slight, and even forbidding, a return, that he felt himself more at a loss than ever he had done in his life; and it was not without some hesitation, he answered, that he had left his regiment four days before, and arrived at Llangorwel the preceding evening.

"WHAT is the matter with you, Major?" said Mrs. Lewis, giving him her hand, which he kissed with great gallantry; though his thoughts,

thoughts, and even his eyes, were directed towards another object. "You don't seem to be in your usual spirits; *you* are not grown stupid, I hope?"

"Are not *you* changed, Madam," replied he, attempting a languishing air, "and how can I remain the same?"

"I NEVER knew before," said Lady Anne, laughing, "that there was so much sympathy between you; pray when did it commence?"

"ALAS!" replied the Major, "my regards for Miss Courteney were such as Mrs. Lewis will forbid me to mention.

"SILLY man; do you think I am grown prudish, because I am married?"

"O, NAME not the word. How could the cruel Julia prefer the happiness of one man, to the repose of all the rest of the sex?"

"PHO, pho; I always wish to disturb their repose, whenever it is in my power. But this is mere rhodomantade, which I suppose

pose you picked up at your last quarters. I will tell you my serious reason for marrying. Our hard destiny has decreed that every woman shall, in some period of her existence, attend upon an ape; and I determined to lose no time, in getting so troublesome a business over." "Better with patience bear the monkies here, than fly to others that we know not of." "Now my good sister here is of a different opinion, and resolves to take her chance in the other world."

"I wish," said Miss Lewis, in a violent pet, "you would chuse some other subject to display your wit upon."

"Lord, my dear," replied Julia, "how unreasonable you are! I thought you would have felt yourself highly obliged to me for allowing it to be your own choice; I assure you it is much more than the world will do!"

Miss Lewis, colouring high with passion, rose from her seat.

"WELL, now you are a good creature, as I said; for you are getting on your cloak to come home with me."

"No, Madam," said Miss Lewis, half choaked with rage; "I will never enter a house which you call your own."

"WELL, you must settle that with your brother. Go, Victoria, get on your things, and come with me home to dinner."

"Not I, indeed," cried Miss Courteney. "I have an engagement this evening, which will prevent my leaving home."

"This is delightful, indeed; to hear such chits as you talk of engagements. I promise you the next time you are asked by me, you shall be disengaged. Come, Mrs. Harley, I must apply to you next; I think you will hardly refuse me."

Mrs. Harley looked at Lady Anne. "Do go," cried her Ladyship. "Julia is not accustomed to be so frequently repulsed."

"I WILL

"I WILL attend you with the greatest pleasure," said the obliging widow; "and should have offered it, but I waited for the kind permission I have now received."

MRS. Lewis made no answer; but rising, laid her hand on the Major's shoulder, crying, "Come, Berkley; you must positively go with us: I am vapoured to death, and want somebody to put me in spirits; though, to say the truth, you seem half stupefied yourself. Nay, make no difficulties; I will release you to-night, and I know my father will have no objection. Lady Anne, good morning; my dear Miss Dorville let me see you soon. Adieu, Miss Courteney; I commend you to your agreeable engagement, whatever it may be. I shall send for my dear Brudenell, perhaps, to day. Nay," turning to Arabella, "don't be jealous, I only mean the horse."

SHE then curtesied carelessly to the rest of the company, and left the room, followed by Mrs. Harley.

THE Major, with a visible alteration of countenance, approached Arabella, who turned pale, and trembled as he drew near.

"IF you knew, Madam," said he, "how great a sufferer I have been, and, indeed, still am, your compassion would induce you to behold me with less indignation. Will you permit me to speak to you, but for five minutes, to-morrow, at Beechwood? I ask it as the greatest favour that can be bestowed upon me, and really have business of some importance."

"THAT, Sir," replied Arabella, with as much composure as she could assume, "may as well be communicated by a few lines addressed to my mother, who will gladly be excused seeing you. With me, you can have none."

"I SEE you are determined, Madam," said he, apparently chagrined, "and I submit."

He then followed Mrs. Lewis and his sister, who were waiting impatiently for him in the hall.

“ LORD, Mamma,” cried Miss Courteney, “ how could you let the Major go? I never knew any thing so foolish: I thought we should have had just such another night as the last; and now we shall be alone, and stupid enough.—But I suppose Julia is still to manage every thing here, just as she used to do.”

“ SILLY girl,” cried Lady Anne, “ pray don’t pretend to take me to task. I care very little whether Berkley ever enters this house again, any more than his troublesome sister, whom I have long wanted a decent pretence to get rid of; for she has hung a dead weight upon my hands for several months past. I shall seize the present opportunity, and, by sending all her cloaths after her, let her know that I do not expect her
her

her back. Let Julia manage how she pleases with her."

ARABELLA, who was thoroughly tired of her visit, soon after took her leave, and, on the way home, had, for once, the pleasure of hearing her uncle speak with approbation of her conduct. He declared that her behaviour to Berkley was energetic and dignified, wanting nothing but a steadier countenance to have rendered it every thing that he could have wished.

ON their arrival at Beechwood, Mrs. Dorville informed them that Mr. Lewis had been with her, and left his most affectionate regards for his sister, intreating, as the greatest favour, her speedy return to Aberhonvy.

"AND intreat he shall," cried Miss Lewis, "before I can think of complying. The insolence of that woman must be humbled; and I think I have the means of doing it in my hands."

“ I HOPE,” said Mrs. Dorville, “ you will not push matters to an extremity; for your brother seems very uneasy.”

“ O, SILLY, obstinate wretch, let him rue the consequences of his own folly. Yet I would not have him ruined neither; I should grieve to see so ancient and respectable a family fall quite to the ground. I have too much good-nature and feeling for the people I have to deal with.”

“ I AM sorry,” said Mr. Stanley, “ that Mrs. Harley is to take up her abode with them; she will be a dangerous adviser.”

“ O,” CRIED Miss Lewis, with much vehemence, “ that she never shall; I would sooner go there myself this very day, than suffer her to stay. I will write to my brother this evening, and insist upon her leaving the house to-night.”

“ THAT would surely be too hasty a measure,” returned Mrs. Dorville. “ Had you not better wait till they again solicit your re-

turn, and then make her departure the condition on which it depends."

"You are very good, dear Madam, to advise me; it shall be exactly as you say. I never was of an unforgiving temper, though I hate to be imposed upon."

CHAPTER XXXV.

SHEWS THE READER THAT POOR MISS MARSHALL
IS AT LENGTH CONVINCED OF HER HAVING
BEEN MADE AN ENTIRE DUPE,
WITH SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES THAT ARISE
FROM A TOO PRECIPITATE MARRIAGE.

THE following day a note arrived from Mr. Berkley, to inform Mrs. Dorville, that, having given up all thoughts of residing any longer in Glamorganshire, he begged to resign into her hands the lease of the Bank, which had been granted for his life by the late Colonel. She was not displeased; and Arabella sincerely rejoiced at this information; and Mr. Stanley wrote a short answer,

to

to acquaint him that his resignation was accepted.

POOR Miss Marshall was, for a time, almost deprived of her senses by this cruel intelligence. Both brother and sister had now effectually drawn aside the mask; and, disposed, as she was, to shut her eyes against a conviction so mortifying, she could not avoid perceiving for what purpose it had been worn so long.

FULL of rage, she vowed to be revenged on this perfidious pair: but this resolution was more easily taken, than the means to execute it devised. Cool consideration succeeded to violent anger; and she plainly perceived that he, at least, was entirely beyond the reach of her vengeance. What then had the poor governess to do, but to endeavour to free herself from the shackles which she had worn to so little purpose, and forget, if possible, that such a man existed? But this was not easily to be done at Beechwood;

every object there reminded her of the *dear deceiver*. She therefore determined to use all her influence, which was still undiminished, to persuade Mrs. Dorville to leave it, and settle in the neighbourhood of London, or at Bath, where, as her relentless fate had decreed that she must give up all hope of the man of her heart, her first choice, there might be a probability, at least, of finding him a worthy successor; for, to so active a mind as hers, an interesting object was necessary: and though she had never enjoyed any considerable share of those personal attractions which are supposed the most powerful instruments in conquering the hearts of the other sex, and though she was past the time of life when feats of that kind are usually achieved, yet she still thought nothing but proper opportunities of displaying her perfections and accomplishments, could be wanting to render her attempts successful; and having found, from sad experience, that
the

the Welsh were a *hard-hearted* race, she resolved, if possible, to change the scene of her operations, and open the campaign in a more favourable quarter.

IN the course of a few days Miss Lewis had the pleasure of receiving a very civil note from her sister, which, in serious terms, expressed how impatient herself and Mr. Lewis were for her return to Aberhonvy, and requesting her to fix a day for that purpose. No other answer was returned to this conciliatory billet, than that she should expect an apology to be made by Mrs. Lewis in person for the insults she had suffered from her, and some other articles to be settled, before she could think of returning to her former place of abode.

THIS was a mortifying business to the high spirited Julia, who could ill brook the thoughts of submission, and yet feared there was no means of avoiding it. She flew to her mother for advice, and directions, how

to extricate herself honourably from this uncomfortable dilemma. Lady Anne knew enough of the world to induce her to place the necessity of *present* condescension in strong terms before her, mingling her advice with reproaches for her hasty folly, in thus throwing herself away upon a poor Welsh squire, whose fortune would barely allow her the necessities of life; telling her, at her age, such a step was inexcusable; for a girl of seventeen to make a match which would have been barely feasible at seven and thirty, was provoking in the extreme. She might have trifled away another dozen years at least, and could scarce have failed to marry better than she had done at last.

JULIA found no small difficulty in bearing all this. At first she defended what she had done with great violence; but at length, bursting into a passionate fit of tears, acknowledged that she was miserable, and undone by her own folly; that she had taken
it

it for granted, that Lewis's fortune was what report declared it; and seeing Mrs. Harley so very eager in the pursuit, it became her grand object to disappoint her, which she could certainly do by no other means than taking herself. She had imagined too, that so weak a man would be a mere puppet in her hands, and that she should have managed every thing; but he was now grown so positive and ill-humoured, that she had not the least influence, and he talked of nothing but his sister.

LADY Anne could only repeat her former advice, and, with some difficulty, at last obtained a promise that she would go the following day to Beechwood, and endeavour, by every means in her power, to bring Miss Lewis into good-humour, and take her back with her; though she declared she would as soon live with a great she bear, as with that ugly, ill-natured, frightful old maid.

HER Ladyship laughed immoderately at the concluding part of her speech; and told her it was now necessary for her to bring the uncouth animal into temper, instead of abusing it.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONTAINS MATTER WHICH, WE DOUBT NOT,
WILL FULLY RECOMPENCE THE READER FOR
THE TROUBLE OF PERUSING IT.

MR. Lewis was highly pleased when his lady, the next morning, proposed going to Beechwood; and thinking his authority had compleatly triumphed over her rebellious inclinations, a point he was very solicitous to ascertain, stepped into the chaise with an air of self importance, greater than he had ever ventured to assume since his marriage. But his pleasure was of no long duration; for his sweet tempered wife, of whom he was willing to imagine himself supreme commander,

commander, contradicted every word he said, and twice, in the course of their short ride, wished she had never tied herself to a mean spirited wretch, who was willing, for any paltry consideration, to expose her to the insults of his pitiful relations.

SHE had, however, sufficient command over herself, to compose her features as they drove up the Park, and enter the house with a tolerable appearance of complacency. She was received with great politeness by all but Miss Lewis, who drew herself up with a stately air, and made a very slight return to the fine speeches which her brother most liberally poured forth.

AFTER a visible struggle, Mrs. Lewis arose from her seat, and approaching her haughty sister, "I wish, my dear Madam," (it was with difficulty she spoke,) "I wish to make you every apology in my power, for what you have been displeased with in my conduct."

SHE

SHE stopped—Miss Lewis looked at her with apparent pleasure, but neither rose, or made her any answer.

SHE proceeded, her colour heightening as she spoke, “ It is as much my wish as your brother’s, to be on the most friendly terms with you, and I hope you will look upon our house as your own.”

“ I SHALL ever retain a strong partiality for Aberhonvy,” replied Miss Lewis, haughtily, “ as the place of my nativity, and the mansion of my respectable ancestors for a number of successive generations, how despicable soever it may appear in your eyes; but, before I can think of returning to it, some preliminaries must be settled.”

“ NAME your own conditions,” cried her brother, eagerly. “ Every thing shall be as you please.”

THE indignant eyes of Julia shot fire, but she remained silent.

“ IN

“ IN the first place then, that lady must be removed,” pointing to Mrs. Harley. “ I will never live in any house which she inhabits.”

“ DEAR Miss Lewis,” cried her sister, “ she is only a visitor. I never intended that she should live with me.”

“ BUT she must quit the house before I enter it; that I insist upon.”

“ O, IF that be all,” said Mr. Lewis, “ I dare say Mrs. Harley will be so good as to leave us immediately; she has many friends in this neighbourhood, and can go this afternoon; won’t you, Madam?”

“ ASK Mrs. Lewis, Sir, whether she is willing thus to dismiss me?”

“ WHY really,” cried the unfeeling Julia, after considering a little, “ I am sorry it happens so; but I cannot refuse my sister any thing that she sets her heart upon.”

“ GOOD heavens!” exclaimed Mrs. Harley,

ley, starting up, "Is it possible that you can treat me thus rudely?"

"DEAR, I am surprized that you should think me rude! I should have been glad of your company for a longer time, if it had not been disagreeable to Miss Lewis."

"NAY, Mrs. Harley," said the insensible Lewis, "I wonder you can be angry about such a matter; I thought you would have been glad to see a reconciliation likely to take place among such near relations."

"AND it is really your desire that I should leave you to day?" said Mrs. Harley.

"Most certainly," replied Mrs. Lewis, who was quite in her element. "I will take care that your cloaths are carefully packed up, and sent to whatever place you shall direct."

"WELL," returned Mrs. Harley, "this is a piece of unfeeling effrontery of which I thought even *you* incapable; but I need not wish for more ample revenge than your foolish

foolish husband, and over-bearing sister-in-law, will inflict upon you; that is my great comfort and consolation."

"AND pray how do you mean to dispose of yourself to-day?" said Miss Lewis, laughing. "Will you walk to the next market town, or hire a double horse?"

THE generous Arabella could not bear to see even her greatest enemy thus cruelly insulted, and immediately offered her a chaise to take her to Cowbridge, which she accepted with abundance of acknowledgments, and begged to wait in the library till it was ready. The habitual politeness of Arabella prompted her to attend her there; and the moment they had left the room, Miss Lewis held out her hand to her sister, in token of perfect reconciliation, saying, "You have given me so much pleasure in the mortification of this woman, that I most heartily forgive you every thing that has passed."

"AND

“AND I assure you,” cried Mrs. Lewis, “I was as much delighted as yourself; for I hate her heartily, and would give fifty guineas this instant to stop the chaise, which Miss Dorville, who is infinitely too good-natured, has ordered for her. How charming it would have been to have dismissed her upon a great cart horse, with Roger, in his Sunday coat, to ride before her!”

HERE both ladies laughed immoderately, notwithstanding Mr. Stanley’s endeavour to check their mirth, by observing, that Mrs. Harley had a good deal of fashion about her; and it would have been very wrong to have reduced her to an apparent level with the common people, particularly as he understood her late husband to have been a gentleman, and the Berkleys a very ancient family.

“O,” CRIED Julia, “neither the gentility of her husband, or the antiquity of her family, should have saved her, if I could have managed it. What would I give to see

see her mounted upon Dobbin; the gentle shower, which is now falling, would have been so refreshing—”

“ BUT suppose it should have washed the red and white off her pretty face,” returned Miss Lewis, “ and left only the complexion which nature gave her?”

“ WHY then,” cried Julia, “ it would have saved her pride; for no creature could have guessed that it was Mrs. Harley who made so rueful an appearance.”

HERE they both laughed again; but the appearance of Arabella, with a grave face, made them a little recollect the impropriety of their conduct; and Miss Lewis, taking her hand with the most insinuating air she could assume, (but alas! the winning graces were not her's,) declared she almost repented the promise she had given her sister of returning to Aberhonvy that night, and should always count the months she had spent at Beechwood among the pleasantest of her life.

ARABELLA

ARABELLA was beginning to make a civil reply to this fine speech, when a servant entering, announced—Sir George Brudenell.

O, FOR a simile adequate to this occasion! for some comparison that would give my reader an idea of the astonishment, the joy, the lovely confusion of Arabella, when she heard his name, when she saw him enter.—Not a word could she utter, when, with perfect grace, he approached her, “Pardon me, dearest Madam, for thus surprizing you,” cried he, taking her hand with great tenderness: “I hope I have the happiness of finding you in good health?”

“CAN you doubt it?” said Miss Lewis.
“Trust the evidence of your own eyes.”

“THAT charming glow might, indeed, have rendered the question unnecessary,” replied he; “yet I am impatient to have the delightful information confirmed.”

“I THANK you for your obliging anxiety,”
said

said Arabella, in a faint tremulous accent,
“ and am happy to see you here.”

“ AND pray, Sir George,” cried Mrs. Lewis, impatient for a share in his notice,
“ have you forgot your old friend Julia?”

“ THAT would be strange, indeed!” replied he, with a lively air. “ I rejoice in this opportunity of congratulating you and Mr. Lewis upon the happy event which has taken place since I saw you: but,” turning to Arabella, “ I have not yet enquired for Mrs. Dorville.”

“ MY mother is tolerably well. You will soon see her; for she returned from her usual morning airing just before you arrived.”

“ I REALLY believe she went out on purpose to avoid us,” said Mrs. Lewis; “ and well she might, for the bustle we have made would have been quite too much for her nerves. Do you know, Sir George, we have
been

been quarrelling, wrangling, and making it up again?"

"THEN I may at least felicitate you on the conclusion of the affair, and myself that I arrived at so agreeable a period of it. I think I can venture to assert that this lady," turning to Arabella, "was not a party concerned in the former part of the business!"

"DON'T be too certain of that," said Mr. Lewis, who thought he must say something; "Miss Dorville does not want spirit to defend what she thinks right; no Welsh woman ever did."

"BUT it is my opinion," said the Baronet, "that she is entirely deficient in that kind of spirit which enables a lady to wrangle, quarrel, and make it up again. I appeal to either of you ladies, if I am not right; the eyes of both give an affirmative."

"LORD," cried Mrs. Lewis, "I have quite forgot how to say no, since I have been married,

ried, and am become the meekest creature upon earth."

" THEN I take it for granted that you took leave of the wrangling art this morning. I give you joy, Mr. Lewis, on this most desirable alteration in your lady's humour. How smoothly will your future days roll down the current of life, with so gentle, so complying a companion!"

" WHAT a fatirical creature you are!" cried Mrs. Lewis: "yet I would rather have your reproofs than the compliments of most other men. Don't you say the same, Miss Dorville? I am sure you agree with me."

" BY no means: I am ever most anxious to avoid giving occasion for reproofs from those I particularly esteem."

" PHO, pho; that is not what I mean. Don't you think he has a very pleasant manner of telling you that you do wrong, or, in other words, of finding fault?"

" I AM

" I AM greatly obliged to you, Madam, for discovering in me a talent which may be so often used with advantage in an intercourse with the world; but to this lady it can never be manifested, therefore she is not qualified to answer your question. To reprove is as impossible as to compliment where merit is so transcendent."

" WELL, in my opinion," said Mr. Lewis, " that is a very handsome compliment. I think I paid you some very like it, Julia, as we were going to Scotland, for I—"

" O, stop, for heaven's sake," interrupted his lady: " name not that journey, or its odious consequences; I detest them both."

" NAY," replied he, " did not you take it with your own free and full consent?"

" No, no, no, you horrid creature, you seized me in a weak moment, when I had not my wits about me."

" SEE, see," said Sir George, " how soon this gentle wife has recovered her power of

giving negatives, and what ample use she makes of it."

JULIA was going to reply with much spirit, when Mrs. Dorville entered the room. Sir George addressed her with an affectionate kind of respect; and she appeared much pleased to see him. The Lewises accepted a slight invitation to stay the day, and even till after supper.

WHEN Arabella had recovered her surprise, and the flutter of spirits which succeeded the first appearance of the Baronet, she felt herself happier than ever she had done in her life. Her heart seemed lightened of an enormous load; and the inward satisfaction which she felt, communicated a sparkling lustre to her beautiful eyes, and doubly animated her expressive countenance. It may be supposed that her lover was not less sensible of his happiness; he was all life, all spirit; and the hours flew rapidly away with all the company, except the impenetrable

Lewis,

Lewis, who found little facination in the conversation of any one, if himself, or his own immediate concerns, were not the subject of it.

AFTER supper he several times hinted that it grew late, and that the nights were very cold; but he was little attended to by his wife and sister, who, when he teased them, bid him put on his coat, and set out as soon as he pleased. Mrs. Dorville had retired at her usual hour, and no one else considered how time flew, when Mr. Lewis, producing his watch, shewed them that it was considerably after twelve.

"WELL, and suppose it is?" cried his gentle spouse: the hours were made for our pleasure, and not we to be slaves to them. We never minded how time went at Llangorwel; but if you are so impatient, pray go and see whether the moon is up. I would not wish to be overturned in that horrid road by the side of the river."

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"O, you

"O, you are very obliging," answered he, violently chagrined. "I have wanted you to go this hour and more, when it was light; and now you begin to be alarmed when it is too late; but you may stay as long as you please; I shall enjoy your fright when we go through the water."

"O, to be sure, you will enjoy it wonderfully; when I know you'll be more afraid, and squall ten times louder, than I shall. Does not your groom always lead your horse through the ford, while you, poor creature, walk over the foot bridge?"

"Come, dear brother," said Miss Lewis, "it is really time to go home, and I beg of you to order the carriage."

AFTER a little more altercation between the amiable pair, he complied, and they prepared to depart, Arabella not making the slightest effort to detain them. Just as they were stepping into the chaise, Mrs. Lewis, who was in high spirits, caught hold of her
sister's

sister's hand with an affectation of kindness, saying, " Well, now, my dear, you have made my words good: did not I always say that you old maids were the best natured creatures upon earth? You look surprized, Sir George, and I own my assertion to be contrary to the general opinion of the world, which pronounces them spiteful, envious beings; but as you see I am right in this instance, you will allow that I may be so in more."

" MR. Lewis," said the Baronet, " how obliging is your lady! She acknowledges her obligations to you, at the same time that she endeavours to display the merits of your sister."

" EGAD," replied Lewis, " I can see no civility intended to either in her last speech; or, to do her justice, in any she ever made in her life."

" AND I," cried Miss Lewis, " have a strong inclination never to enter her house."

Yet," recollecting herself, "she shall not so get the better of me; I will go, that she may see and feel my power."

SIR George handed her into the chaise all crimsoned over; Mrs. Lewis followed, saying, affectedly, "I suppose you think all this squabbling very strange, but we shall be the best friends in the world before we get home. There is nothing so amusing as little family disputes."

"GUESS, then," replied Sir George, "how highly I have been entertained; for to me they have the grand charm, novelty."

"O FIE," cried she, as they drove away, "how can you always make one feel you, like a snake in the grass?"

SIR George would have led Arabella back to the dining parlour, and she would probably have permitted him, but Miss Marshall, stung with envy at her apparent happiness, met her at the door, with an anxious hope that she would be no sufferer from sitting

ting up so late, which had given *her* a violent head-ach; and Mr. Stanley, with the same undesired officiousness, begged she would lose no time in retiring to her apartment; telling her, she looked a little feverish; so he most injudiciously called the glow of pleasure which bloomed on her cheek, and animated her eyes with a more than usual degree of radiance.

“FEVERISH!” cried Sir George, who was still farther gone in the same delicious delirium: “In my opinion your charming niece never looked so enchantingly well; so perfectly herself. Do, dearest Madam, indulge us but with one other half hour. I ask for no more.”

SHE advanced a few steps; but Mr. Stanley, who appeared to both, at that moment, under a form little less displeasing than their evil genius, again interposed; and they were obliged, though most unwillingly, to separate.

CHAPTER XXXVII

IN WHICH A MUTUAL DECLARATION OF THE
AMIALE PASSION TAKES PLACE BETWEEN
SIR GEORGE AND ARABELLA.

THE lovers retired each to a restless pillow; for excess of pleasure is as great an enemy to repose as its dark reverse. They lived over again a thousand times, in imagination, the last fleeting happy hours, and anticipated the many future ones, which seemed to promise still more perfect and unmixed delight.

"AWAY," cried Sir George, "with the cold maxims of peevish philosophy; the precious gem which we call happiness does exist,

exist, pure and unallayed; I feel, at this instant, the exquisite bliss that I am capable of, that I was formed to receive. It is not the intoxication of pleasure which enchants me; it is the prospect of the highest, most rational, and permanent enjoyment. I am the most fortunate of human beings; and I will manifest my gratitude to the bountiful bestower of all, by dispensing as large a portion of his blessings, as my power can command, to all within its influence. This has ever been the leading wish of my heart, the principal pleasure of my life; and O, how infinitely will that pleasure be increased, by the participation of such a companion, such a dearer self!"

HE arose before the sun, and, impatient to behold, at least, some traces of his Arabella's genius, hastened to her favourite dell, which, though the slow advances of a cold spring had done little yet to ornament, he viewed with delight and admiration. He

visited every walk which they had trod together, with an enthusiastic degree of pleasure. Yet none of them detained him long. He looked at his watch a hundred times; and when he thought it probable that the hour of Arabella's rising drew nigh, hastened towards the house; but, long before he reached it, he beheld the goddess of his idolatry approaching, who, in his eyes, appeared like the bright orb of day, to revive and illuminate all nature around her.

THEY walked towards the dell: but, at that time, all places were alike indifferent; the creation seemed to each to contain no object worthy of attention but the other.

THE enraptured Baronet informed his lovely companion of the early conquest she had made of his heart; of his extreme unwillingness to believe the malicious insinuations of her pretended friends, of their last grand artifice, of his misery on account of it, and the supposed good fortune of Lord

Charles

Charles Blair. He then lightly touched upon his feelings during his very affecting attendance upon her in the autumn, and dwelt particularly on his wretchedness since that time.

"It is impossible, dearest Madam," proceeded he, "to give you an adequate idea of what I have suffered since I last saw you; your merits, your perfections, and your extreme loveliness, all placed within my view, though beyond my reach, were always present to my imagination. I flew to business, to amusement, to books, but found no relief in any of these common resources of the unhappy: wherever I went, and however I employed myself, I still felt the barbed arrow rankle in my heart.

"I HAD determined, on my return from the continent, after a very long absence from England, never again to quit a country, in a thousand respects, preferable to every other, and where I had obligations and duties which

required my attention; but, restless and miserable, I resolved again to leave it, and waited the announcement of your marriage as the signal for my departure. This was my situation when the Duke of Dunbeath arrived in London. I was impelled, by an irresistible impulse, to visit him, to talk of Beechwood, and to enquire when he bent his course towards that fascinating spot.

“ I TREMBLED when he opened his lips to answer—my very life seemed to hang upon the sound.—But, O, Madam! what was my astonishment, my extacy, to find that he had no farther interest there!

“ I flew home—I was in the carriage in an hour—every moment’s delay seemed to threaten an obstacle to my happiness. At length I arrived; and you now see before you a man whose sole hope of bliss depends upon your favour.

“ My whole heart is now laid open before you; it dreads but one misfortune, it asks
but

but one blessing; for in that all others are included. Condescend, most amiable of women, condescend to confirm the happy presage which I draw from your eyes!"

"I WILL not, Sir," replied Arabella, hesitating and confused, "I will not be so uncandid as to pretend that you are indifferent to me, after the thousand obligations you have conferred upon me; I should hold myself highly culpable if I did not feel most tenderly bound to you. I will own still further, that, exclusive of my gratitude, I am not insensible of your merits."

SHE stopped.—"O, go on," cried Sir George, pressing her hand in a rapture, "say something more: never before did even the music of that voice so entirely enchant me. Say that you will be the dear companion, the guardian angel of my future days!"

"I TRUST," answered she, "that, in endeavouring to contribute to your happiness, I shall

"I shall secure my own—Do not press me further, I have surely said all that you can wish."

"DEAREST creature, you have raised me to the summit of human bliss. You excel all your sex in openness and candour, as much as in every other charm and excellence."

He proceeded in the same passionate strain, and drew from her still farther confessions. But I will dwell no longer on the scene, which, however interesting and delightful to the amiable pair who were actors in it, may prove tedious if recited at full length.

THEY were summoned to the breakfast parlour as soon as they returned from their walk, where Mrs. Dorville, contrary to her usual custom, was ready to receive them. She was grown so partial to Sir George, that she had risen a full hour sooner than she was accustomed to do; and determined that morning, as the air was rather cold, to give up her

her airing, so much pleasure did she promise herself in his society.

Mr. Stanley was differently disposed, and sat silent and thoughtful during breakfast. It was scarcely over, before he desired a conference with his niece in the library. She looked a little surprized, but instantly complied with his request. He shut the door, with great caution, the minute they came in; and placing two chairs before the fire, handed her to one, and seated himself on the other: then, after a short silence, he began his discourse with hoping she was fully sensible of the warm and disinterested part he had ever taken in her good and prosperity; that she had also a proper sense of the influence his near affinity to her might naturally lead him to hope for, from a lady of her character, who, though, in the common sense of the expression, perfectly independent, and mistress of her own conduct, would not be eager to throw off their useful fetters, which,

in

in her earlier years, had been necessary to guard her from injury.

ARABELLA was all attention, wondering what was to follow this long, parading preface. At length, after much more to the same purpose, he came to the intended point.

“ I HAVE a request to make you, my dear Miss Dorville,” cried he, “ which I am most anxiously solicitous should not be refused: you will yourself hereafter own the propriety, the reasonableness of it: and I beg that you will not lightly disregard it. I see that Sir George Brudenell is come down with an intention of offering himself to your acceptance, and I will own to you that I think he would be no undesirable match for any lady. Indeed the daughters of the first nobility frequently marry rich commoners; but they have titles of their own, therefore a principal objection is removed; and they are sometimes in want of fortunes, without which the most splendid rank will not properly support them.

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But

But your case is exactly the reverse of this; your fortune is large, but you want a proper alliance to add dignity, and give eclat to all the advantages which you possess. I fear you are, or imagine yourself, prepossessed in favour of this Baronet, whose personal attractions, I will confess, are sufficient to excuse such a weakness, if not obstinately persisted in."

"IN consideration of your *feelings*, (which, however, women of fashion make no sort of account of,) I will not ask you absolutely to give him a dismissal: all that I request, and I do it very earnestly, is, that you will keep clear of any engagement with him for three months to come, and employ that time in visiting the great world. Go up to London immediately; settle yourself in a splendid house; let your equipage, your suit correspond with it; be presented at court, and introduced to the very first line of company only, and I will answer for it in the course
of

of that time, men every way equal, or superior, to Sir George, will throw themselves, and their coronets, at your feet.

“COME, my dear niece, confer the greatest of all obligations upon me, by granting my request. I only beg of you to promote your own *happiness*; for that, I think, is your favourite word.”

ARABELLA, half smiling, half confused, replied, “Dear Sir, this plan, which, however, I will ingenuously own, suits ill with my inclinations, is proposed too late.”

“How, too late!” cried her uncle, rising hastily; “surely you cannot yet have engaged yourself! you have scarce seen him but in company!—Perverse girl.”

ARABELLA arose too; “You have been pleased to say, Sir, that I am independent, and perfect mistress of my own actions; the laws of my country judge me competent to the possession and sole management of my property; and, I flatter myself, that I am, at least,

least, more able than any other person can be, to determine what plan of conduct will most probably contribute to my happiness. I think myself very fortunate to have been selected from all the world, by a man so uncommonly amiable and deserving, as—”

“ HOLD, hold, Miss Dorville; I have done; I give you up to your own ways; I only lament that you were not placed in a situation where so much might have been attained. You would have performed the part of a country curate's daughter admirably. O, I am out of all patience; I am cut to the very soul.”

SAYING this, he suddenly quitted the room, leaving his niece amazed at this additional proof of the strength of that folly which she had never before seen manifested in, what appeared to her, so very absurd a degree.

SIR George had taken advantage of Arabella's absence to open his proposals to her mother: they were such as could fear no objections,

jections, and were received in the most favourable manner. Mrs. Dorville informed him of her intention of giving up Beechwood to her daughter, and settling at Bath, as the waters had of late been warmly recommended to her; and she should there be conveniently situated near several gentlemen of the faculty, of whose skill she had a high opinion; that she hoped to see him and her dear Arabella there at least once in every year, and would, perhaps, spend the hot months with them at one of their country residences.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

COMPLETION OF THE HAPPINESS OF SIR GEORGE
AND ARABELLA.

AT length the thrice happy day arrived, which was to unite the lovely Arabella to the tenderest and most deserving of lovers. She had, a short time before, prevailed upon a young lady, for whom she had a great regard, and who was just returned from a visit to the continent, to be with her at the time of her marriage. Her presence added to their enjoyment, if felicity so perfect could be said to admit of increase. The festival was celebrated with the most animated joy, not only in the neighbourhood of Beechwood, but at each of their different seats, where the doors were opened wide by the bountiful hand of rational hospitality, the promoter of chearfulness and pleasure, the enemy of riot and excess.

IF

If any of my readers should wish to know more of the fortunes of the inferior personages who have been introduced to their notice in this work, I will endeavour, in few words, to satisfy them.

MAJOR Berkley, within a few days after the time when we last saw him at Llangorwel, set out to join his regiment, which was stationed at Plymouth. His sister, out of humour, out of spirits, and out of cash, met him on the road, and, unasked, accompanied him thither. Soon after her arrival, she strongly attracted the attention of an old veteran, who had a place of considerable profit in the dock yard. Notwithstanding his numerous infirmities, she appeared equally partial to him; and when her brother was removed to different quarters, took a genteel house, furnished it in taste, and still continues to live, under the auspices of her kind friend, in a very genteel stile.

THE Major, it was generally thought, left the place and her, with little reluctance; for,

as

as the world is strangely inclined to be censorious, his sister did not escape the tongue of scandal; and it was said he had occasion for all his address to avoid resenting some insinuations most maliciously thrown out against her in his presence; though, as he rationally argued, it can never be deemed necessary for a man to defend all the proceedings of his relations, sword in hand; and while he wisely keeps clear of the matrimonial noose, he is not obliged to risk his life for the honour of any of the sex.

I HARDLY need say more of the Lewises, than that they continue to live together, chiefly, one would imagine, for the pleasure of teasing each other, which is their continual aim; and each sister is by turns triumphant, as the poor Squire is by turns the tool of each. It is whispered that their fortune melts rapidly away; but they are not in the habit of looking beyond the present day, so there is no diminution of expence, or apparent apprehension of approaching difficulties.

LET

LET us turn, gentle reader, from this disgusting picture; let us take *one other* transient view of the amiable Sir George and Lady Brudenell. They have now been married more than two years. See how the charms of the lovely Arabella are heightened by the rapture with which she beholds the cherub boy who lies on her lap, and playful attempts to hide his dimpled cheeks in her soft bosom! Behold the enraptured father; see him throw his arms round both in unspeakable extacy! Fortunate and virtuous pair; long may your felicity continue; long may ye drink from its genuine, its only unfailing source, *philanthropy*, the pure waters of real happiness.

F I N I S.

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